No. 903
Friday
26 July '96

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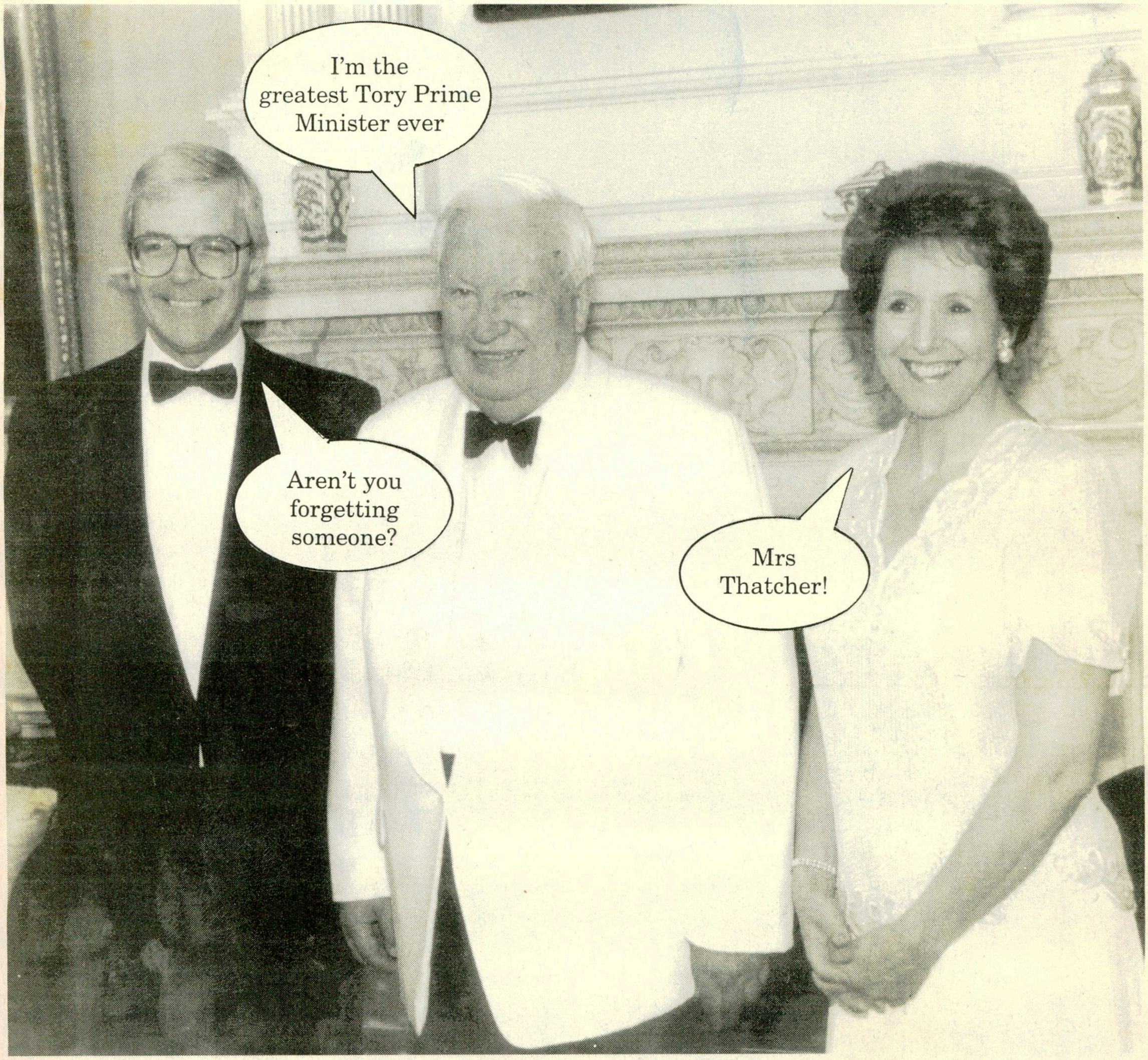
BIRTHDAY SPECIAL



78-79-80!
PHEW! WHAT A GROCER!

This is an appalling story. Please don't read it unless you're willing to help.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
UNITED KINGDOM

Shells were falling in Kabul. It was bitterly cold and there was little food. A young woman lived on her own with her three small children. The eldest was nine and the youngest was two. Their father had been killed in a bomb attack. The children were very hungry. During a lull in the bombardment, the woman left her home to find some food.

She knew the city was dangerous, but her children's hunger over-rode her fears. Before leaving her house she carefully locked the door, so that the children would at least have the protection of a strong plank of wood between them and danger.

The woman had not gone far when she was stopped by two men dressed as guards. She explained to them that her children were starving, but they didn't want to hear. They told her she was under arrest and took her to a house full of men in dirty uniforms.

One by one, the men raped her. She was raped by twenty two men. It took three days. At last she was allowed to go. The woman ran into the street and all the way home. The door was still locked.

Opening it, she found that her three children had died of hypothermia.

Remember Afghanistan?

No-one else does. It's a place the world's leaders have forgotten, or chosen to ignore. For years a battleground of international power politics, it is now caught in a vicious civil war.

Two generations of children in Afghanistan have never known peace. Violence and death have become so much part of existence that even the rugs of Afghan nomads are woven with strange designs: Kalashnikov rifles, tanks and helicopter gunships.

In the towns, armed bands struggle to fill the vacuum left by the departed Russians. Kabul is the most lawless territory on earth. The gangs bombard and kill each other with complete disdain for innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

Foreign governments have lined up to offer covert political and military aid to the various factions, and none seem to care that the groups they support are terrorizing defenceless men, women and children.

In Afghanistan such terrrible things are happening that we at Amnesty International, who should be used to reports of horror and inhumanity, are numb.

When our researchers went to the country, these were some of the stories they heard.

"They said they'd force me to eat human flesh."

A taxi driver taking a woman passenger through Kabul was stopped by an armed gang. They ordered him to sign a paper saying he had sold his car to them.

When he refused they said they would force feed him human flesh.

After a beating, he signed. But they did not let him go. They brought some cooked meat and forced him and the woman to eat. The driver ate a small piece and felt sick. Next his captors demanded that he sign another paper, stating that the woman passenger was his sister and that he had sold her to them for a certain sum of Afhanis.

The taxi driver refused and was beaten again. At last the two prisoners were told they could go. The driver had started down the stairs when he heard a noise behind him. He turned, and saw that the woman was no longer there.

"He had taught girls at the village school".

A woman described to Amnesty International how her four small children saw their father killed.

He was a schoolteacher. Mujahideen guards came to their house. They confronted him with the fact that he taught girls at the village school. (Some Mujahideen think that women should not go to school.)

The gunmen began beating the teacher. His wife and children shouted for mercy, but they would not stop. At last one of them unslung his Kalashnikov, stood back and shot the teacher in the heart.

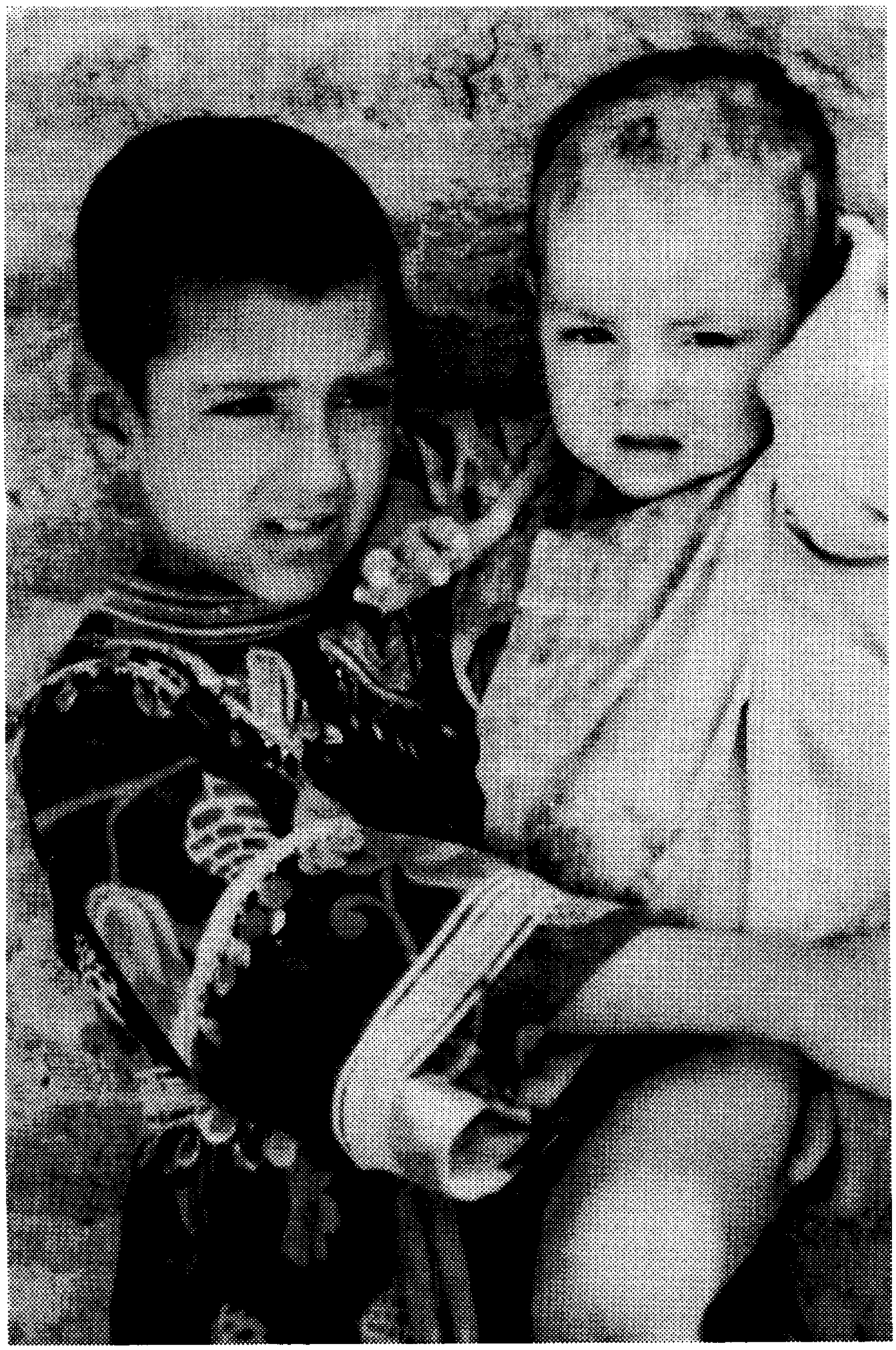
"I cannot describe what they did to me."

A 15 year old girl who had committed the crime of going to school told us what happened when a gang of armed men came to her house one night.

"They shot my father right in front of me. He was a shopkeeper. It was nine o'clock at night. They came to our house and told him they had orders to kill him because he had allowed me to go to school.

"The Mujahideen had already stopped me from going to school, but that was not enough. They then came and killed my father. I cannot describe what they did to me after killing my father."

Amnesty International: working worldwide for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture, extra-judicial executions, "disappearances" and the death penalty.



Refugee children await medical treatment. Thousands have been killed in the fighting.

These people have one last and only hope.

Did you go to school? When was the last time you left your house to buy some food? Do you worry about taking a taxi by yourself?

Imagine, for a moment, swapping lives with people in Afghanistan. How long could you endure the terror?

Wouldn't you desperately pray for help? Help from anywhere, from anyone?

Do you want to know the really frightening truth?

These people's last and only hope is you.

Governments don't want to know. There's only you and the only realistic way you can make a difference is by joining with thousands of other people who feel the same way. Please join Amnesty International.

With enough support, we can help to stop the killings and rapes. We will know we have enough support when they stop.

Amnesty International will never give up.

With your support we will continue to investigate, publicise and campaign to stop the atrocities that are taking place in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

You, as a free human being, have at this moment the simple choice of whether or not to help us.

If you want to help, join Amnesty International today. Whether you join us, or make a donation, your support is valuable and deeply welcome.

There is nothing left to say.

If you are going to turn the page, if these people's stories do not move you, if you can't find it in you to help - then there is nothing more to say.

The woman who lost her children is now insane. The fifteen year old who was daring enough to go to school cannot speak about her ordeal.

They have no words to implore you.

Neither have we. We have run out of words to describe pain and grief. The rest of this page is for you. Use it to write down your reasons for reading these stories and still refusing to help.

If you can't think of anything to write, please fill in the coupon.

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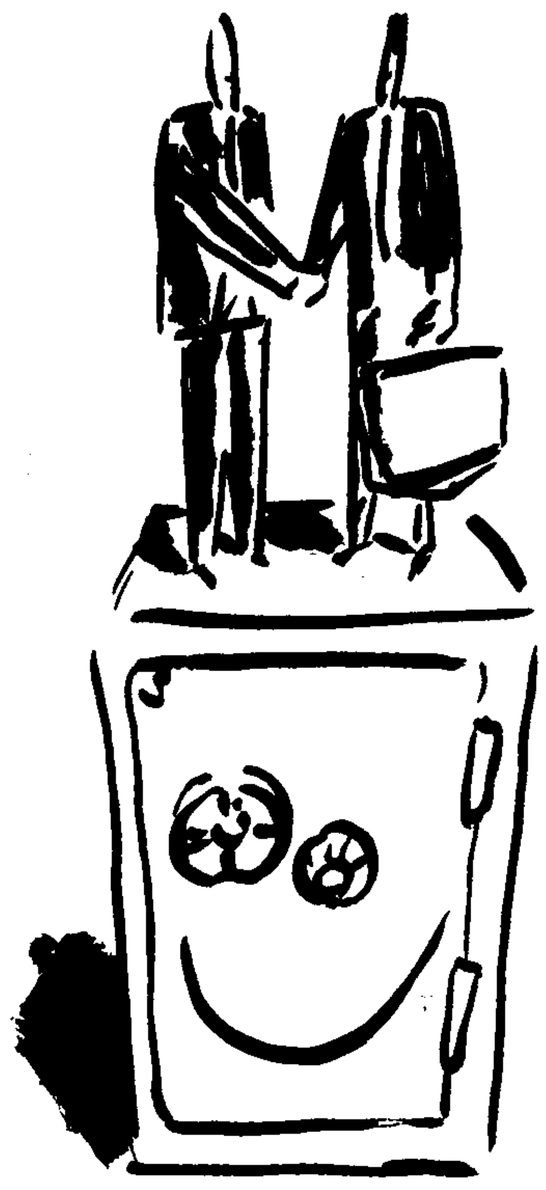

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Gnome

A NUMBER of scandalous suggestions in the media have attempted to link Gnome-Sweet-Gnome's £1.79 billion bid to buy British Army Quarters with my chairmanship of the "Save John Major" fund-raising campaign.

Let me emphasise with all the force at my command that these two enterprises have no connection whatsoever.

When it comes to the sale of Army houses, Mr Portillo will make an impartial consideration of a number of bids, before selecting that of the "Gnome-Sweet-Gnome" consortium.

He will make the choice entirely on its merits for the benefit of the taxpayer, without any regard whatsoever to the many millions of pounds I am helping to raise to help his party (and the likes of him) to be re-elected.

I hope I make myself clear, especially to Mr Portillo.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
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COLOUR SECTION

BETTING on which of the four huge consortia will win the contract for perhaps the biggest government handout of all time — the privatisation of armed forces' married quarters — has now produced a firm favourite: BHL.

B stands for Beckwith as in John Beckwith, the millionaire property speculator and chairman of the Premier Trust, which offers meetings with John Major at £100,000 a time.

L stands for Lehmann, the American bankers who have an intriguing link with David Hart, the millionaire property speculator and influential independent adviser on the sale to defence secretary Michael Portillo.

When Hart was organising the "working miners" group during the 1984-1985 miners' strike from a suite in Claridges, Labour MP Austin Mitchell wrote to Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor asking about his connections with Hart. MacGregor replied that he had known the Hart family well since Hart's brother had worked with him at his American bank — Lehmann Brothers.

WHERE did the idea come from for the Premier Club, whereby a mere £100,000 a year entitled a Tory party supporter to meet the leader?

Could it by any chance be related to the Labour party's Thousand Club, whereby a donation of £1,000 entitled you to automatic invitations to regular meetings with the leader?

The only difference appears to be that a meeting with Major costs one hundred times more than a meeting with Blair.

ANY voter thinking of supporting Sir Jammy Fishpaste's Referendum party in Britain would be advised to note his record in the European parliament.

Sir Jammy was elected an MEP on a French political list in June 1994. Since then there have been 142 full plenary sessions of the parliament and Goldsmith has popped in just 14 times — an attendance rate of 9.9 per cent.

Sometimes whole months sail by without the MEPs seeing their billionaire colleague. His inactivity verges on the masterly. Between July 1994 and April 1996 there were 1,283 recorded votes in the parliament. Goldsmith voted 43 times, a productivity rate of 3.4 per cent.

A lot of an MEP's work takes place in committee, yet Goldsmith is one of the few who is not a full member of any committee. One Labour MEP was surprised to find that Goldsmith was a substitute member of the agriculture committee — he had never seen him in attendance.

Goldsmith's most recent appearance was on the day of a vote on where and how often the parliament itself should meet. A fierce debate raged, with half the MEPs wanting 11 Strasbourg meetings a year and the other half wanting 12. Goldsmith's "Europe of the Nations" group strongly favoured 12 meetings and was disappointed when defeated by one vote. Minutes after the vote a smirking Goldsmith belatedly entered the chamber to catcalls from the opposition — but too late to turn the vote for his party.

The MEPs might see Goldsmith only rarely, but they hear from him a lot. In fact British MEPs complain of a barrage of propaganda, ranging from free copies of his dire European diatribe *The Trap*, to his *Referendum Party News*. There was even a press release on his recent Referendum party speech in Newcastle where his supporters gave Sir Jammy a standing ovation (even though there were only 400 of them in a hall seating 2,000).

Goldsmith is also annoying businessman. One was furious to receive a mailshot from the Referendum party in an envelope which came from the Federation of Small Businesses. He phoned the FSB to ask why it had given his address. A sheepish spokesman admitted it had sold its mailing list to Jammy's party for £8,000. Rather than being converted by the infamous billionaire's political rantings, the businessman resigned from the FSB in disgust.

THE government's capitulation to the Orange marchers at Drumcree threatened for a moment to break the pact between the Labour party and the government on Northern Ireland issues.

The cheek of Mo Mowlem, Labour's spokeswoman on Northern Ireland, in mentioning a suggestion she had made a year ago — that the government should set up a commission into excesses of the marching season — for a moment threatened her with the loss of her nickname: Mo Surrender.

The reddest face on the Labour frontbenches, however, belonged to former Northern Ireland high-jumper Kate Hoey. In a recent article in *Ulster Review* Kate sang the praises of Bob McCartney, new "UK Unionist" MP for North Down. His election, purred Hoey, "has given a boost to the pro-Union voice in the Commons. Not only is he articulate and personable but his clear and unambiguous support for Labour on social and economic issues has impressed many Labour MPs". McCartney's articulate and unambiguous support for the Orange marchers at Drumcree (whom he described as "a symbol of a people who have said enough is enough") was marginally less impressive.

Hoey went on to slobber over David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader generally held to be chiefly responsible for the Drumcree fiasco. "Determined", "astute", "plain-speaking" were some of the epithets she used, somehow avoiding a far more appropriate adjective: "bigoted".

THOSE wise and eminent citizens who distribute national lottery dosh recently received two applications from Felixstowe, the Suffolk town which falls in the constituency of John Gummer.

One was from the Felixstowe Conservative Club's bowls section, the other from the non-political Felixstowe Bowls Club. Both wanted money to improve their facilities.

The Felixstowe Bowls Club was turned down flat, while the Conservative Club — obviously a far more deserving cause — received a grant of £20,500.

"It's all about bums on stage"

Street Of Shame

THE *Daily Star* has been urging readers to broaden their literary horizons and "grab a copy of *OK!*, one of Britain's most talked about magazines" at the special price of one penny. "For 1p, it's OK!" the *Star* gushes. "And a helluva read, too."

No doubt Sharon Ring, deputy editor of *OK!*, is well pleased with this hyperbolic publicity. Perhaps she will convey her gratitude to Phil Walker, the editor of the *Daily Star* — who happens to be her husband.

"ETHNIC Cleansing in the UK: Some of the 600 Ulster Homes Emptied by the Mobs in 10 Days." This headline, splashed across the *Independent*'s front page last Wednesday, was certainly eye-catching. Alas, it was also untrue.

Indie reporter Jojo Moyes claimed the figure of 600 families who had allegedly fled their homes was provided by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. But the RUC had said no such thing. What it told Moyes was that in the previous week there had been 251 "intimidation incidents" against civilians (plus another 89 against the police), and that these figures were correct "as of 0600 hours on 16 July". On reading her notes, the hapless hackette somehow turned "0600 hours" into 600 displaced families.

According to an unofficial RUC estimate, the correct figure was about 30 — most distressing, to be sure, but not *quite* the same as 600.

Still, Moyes shouldn't take all the blame: she has little experience of the province, having been flown in only a few days earlier to "fill in" for the paper's veteran Belfast correspondent, David McKittrick. And where was he? On 12 July, at the start of the busiest week in the year for any Ulster hack, he had taken himself off to Donegal on holiday.

HEATHER "Hysterical" McGlone, *Daily Express* features editor, lived up to her nickname when she resigned last week in, er, hysterics.

Asked by the news desk to confirm the spelling of Margot Hemingway, McGlone screamed: "I'm not a **** researcher!" She promptly scribbled her resignation on a yellow memo sheet, stuck it on the desk of deputy editor Ian Monk and flounced out.

That was something she had done many times under the dire regime of "Sir" Nicholas Lloyd, but he always responded by sending Heather flowers and inviting her back. The micro-skirted McGlone thus rose way beyond her talents under Lloyd to the number three position.

When Richard Addis took over as editor, the witless "Hysterical" realised the game was up. Addis was determined to sack her and even practised the scene with the man who stepped into her job, Mark "Biscuits" Palmer. Palmer, acting the role of "Hysterical" with brilliant Method intuition, had "McGlone" burst into tears when given the bullet — which, of course, she did.

"Hysterical" begged Addis to demote her and give her a chance. The new editor relented, sending the over-promoted hackette several rungs down the editorial food chain and back to features. Now, however, it's back home to hubby, former *Standard* editor Lou Kirby; and "Hysterical" is apparently planning to sue the *Depress* claiming that she had been "temporarily unbalanced".

Just how long, *Express* hacks wonder, has McGlone been unbalanced?

STILL smarting from his recent sacking, former Express Newspapers managing director Andrew Cameron was surprised to get a message from Richard Addis and Sue Douglas, editors of the *Daily* and *Sunday Express*, urgently requesting a chat.

The trio duly lunched together at the Caprice last Wednesday — though the subject of their furtive conversation remains a mystery.

What would Lord "Alco" Hollick, the puritanical new boss of the Express group, say if he knew that his editors were consorting with the enemy? Addis and Douglas need not worry: their secret is safe with the *Eye*.

***SUN* readers were given a treat last Friday with the temporary return of *Mail* columnist Richard Littlejohn — "back again for one day only to give a bucketload to Blair". Hurrah!**

"After weeks of dithering, Tony Blair finally came off the fence and urged striking tube workers to call off their strike," began Littlejohn, before launching a trenchant attack on Blair's opportunism. Impressive stuff really, given tight deadlines.

Except it wasn't. Although the first seven paragraphs and last two were newly minted, the 24 paragraphs in the middle were not. The breathtaking satire directed at Blair — "when he's supping with the Tory press he brings a short-handled spoon and devours British beef as if it's going out of fashion, which thanks to him and his scaremongering sidekicks, it is" etc — is absolutely identical to the tablets of wisdom contained in the *Daily Mail*'s 4 July Richard Littlejohn column.

Odd that; but no odder than his reappearance in the *Sun*. After Kelvin McKenzie's departure, his protégé also fancied a change and headed for the *Mail* (and its bigger budgets) only to be forced by News Corp into a form of journalistic limbo until his *Sun* contract expired. Harsh words were exchanged, but presumably there's now been a change of heart. Rather like Blair's policies, really.

SINCE the last *Eye* highlighted Jeremy Clarkson's gaffe in his *Sun* column (he fell for an April fool press release from BMW), the *Eye* has received a cocky letter from *Sun* assistant editor Chris Stevens.

"Your eagle-eyed correspondent spotted that we fell for a spoof BMW story but was not eagle eyed enough to spot that it was in Ken Gibson's column **NOT** Jeremy Clarkson's," smirked Stevens.

He went on: "It should be easy to tell the difference... they are on separate pages." This great display of tabloid bravado is spoilt somewhat when the page is studied again. The spoof story *is* on the same page as Clarkson's column. Either this means Clarkson is responsible for the boob and the hapless Gibson was taking the flak. Or, heaven forbid, "The Best Writer On The Road" doesn't even write his own column.

IN A sensational scoop, *Sunday Telegraph* hack Richard Rivlin disclosed on 14 July that the Jardine Fleming group "is set to be reprimanded by the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation". The IMRO inquiry, he reported, was "focusing on the late booking of trades and the lack of a clear audit trail".

Can this by any chance be related to a story from the *Wall Street Journal* of 12 June, headed "UK Regulator May Reprimand Jardine Fleming", which revealed that IMRO was "focusing on the late booking of trades and the lack of a clear audit trail"?

Er, yes: whole paragraphs of Rivlin's story were simply copied out, verbatim, from the *Journal*. Which leaves only one question: why did it take him a month to plagiarise the piece when a competent touch typist could have done it in half an hour?

IS brutish *Evening Standard* editor Max "Hitler" Hastings about to realise his long-cherished dream of a great country mansion to complement his grouse shooting pretensions? Snobbish estate agents Strutt & Parker excitedly announce that Max is trying to flog Rose Cottage, the four-bedroom Berkshire home inherited from his famous gardening writer mother, Anne Scott-James.

But so illustrious is "Hitler", apparently, that the "charming period house" is being sold entirely on the basis that it belongs to the dismal snob. "Mr Hastings", gushes the agent's bulletin, "is perhaps best remembered for reporting during the Falklands War and is a well respected author".

Offers are invited "in the region of £230,000" — a disgracefully low figure considering that a blue plaque will doubtless one day record that Lord Hastings of Port Stanley once haunted the otherwise idyllic Rose Cottage.

WHILE fuming Andrew Jaspan, former editor of the *Observer*, sounded off about his sacking, new boss Will Hutton killed off Jaspan's baby, the Preview Section.

The colour listings section cost the beleaguered *Observer* £2 million this year and was universally unpopular — except with its own staff. For its final issue they were left unchecked and produced a Preview littered with tirades against the *Observer*, gags and job applications for the departing staff.

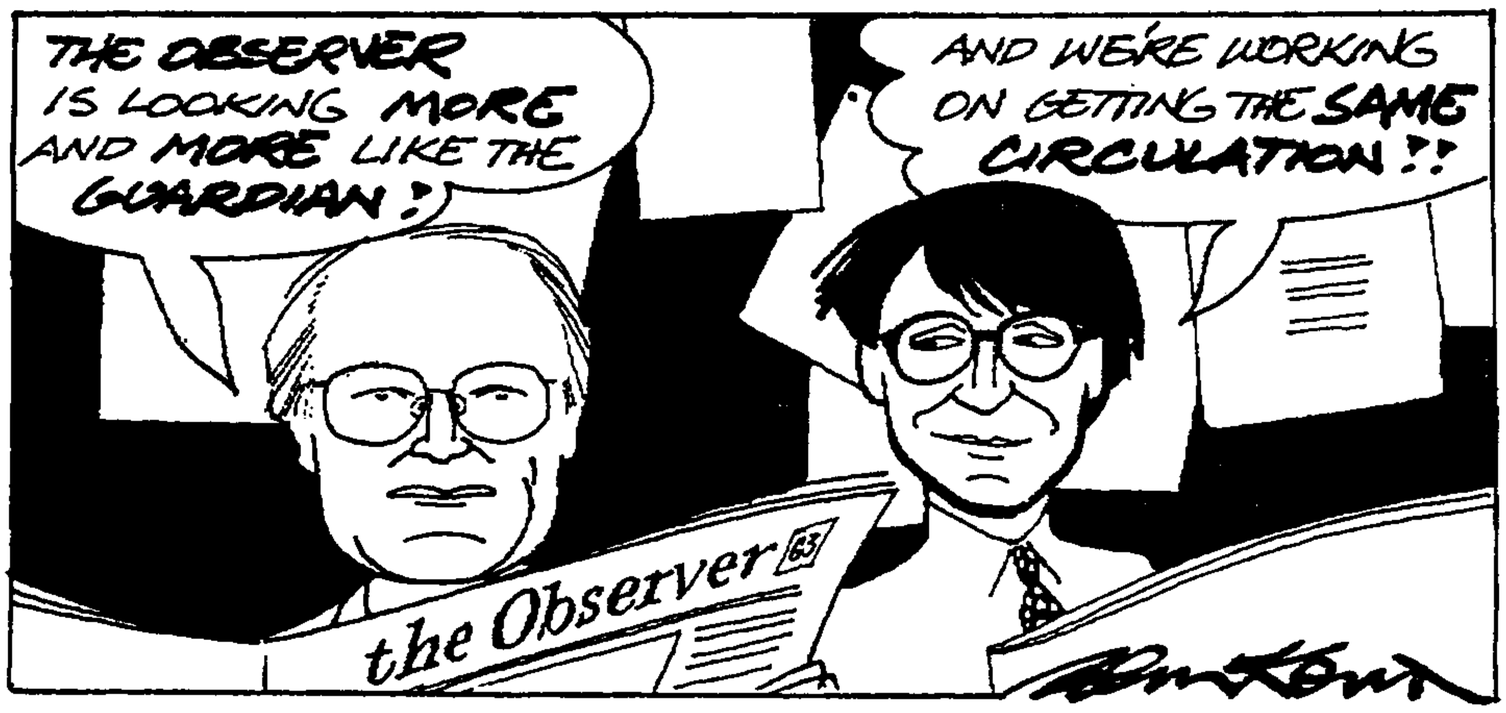
Even the front cover had the "w" of Preview knocked to the bottom of the page under the headline "What A Disaster". Inside, soap opera reviewer Greg Rowland noted: "I leave you in the capable hands of a veritable schmendrik from Sussex university" — his successor on soaps. And on the final page the cartoon was a blurred modernist affair with a barely readable "Fuck Off" scrawled around it.

When Hutton was presented with this final issue he could have spiked the whole thing. But in true liberal tradition he let the workers have their say before sacking them anyway. Hutton even allowed the mag's editor to keep her handsome pay-off. Perhaps he was fearful of giving ammunition to the *Sunday Times*, which is preparing a piece on the yawning gap between the leftie ideologue and the editor who has sacked staff and is currently in dispute with his hacks' union.

FOLLOWING the closure of their office drinking den, hacks at Express Newspapers have a new treat in store: Stephen Grabiner, the youthful new managing director, has hired an "industrial psychologist" to interview every member of staff, asking them such questions as "What do you think of your bosses?"

Only a few days into the job, the shell-shocked shrink is already reeling. After a brief encounter with *Sunday Express* hacks, he confessed to an executive: "I've never met people like this".

God knows what he will think when he finally ventures into the booze-sodden hell known as the *Daily Star* office.



HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

with ***'The Marquesa'***

HALLO! THE Princess of Wales has once again come between man and wife. This time it is the dashing Dominic Lawson, editor of the *Sunday Helloagraph*, and his well-bred consort Rosa Monckton, director of snobby Bond Street jewellers Tiffany and daughter of Viscount Monckton.

Rosa is a close confidante of Di, as we must once again call her; but the princess was enraged when a joke she had shared with Rosa regarding the Duchess of York appeared in Mr Lawson's journal the following Sunday. Diana had told Rosa, most amusingly, that her lawyer Anthony Julius used to call La Fergiana "the Yellow Canary" as they had studied her divorce for possible pitfalls — "just as miners had once taken canaries down the pit to check for poisonous gasses".

Diana, embarrassingly, happened to be lunching with La Freebiana the very Sunday this story appeared. The Princess immediately phoned Rosa to demand: "What's the point of me telling you anything, if it appears immediately in your husband's newspaper?" Rosa, in turn, is so furious with her ambitious husband, I understand she has even withdrawn conjugal rights!

HALLO! *THE pecking order in the new "restructured" Royal Family plc is slowly becoming apparent. For when the Duchess of Freebiana phones Hickstead host Douglas Bunn to say that she wishes to see the horse trials, the snobbish Bunn explains to a distressed Freebiana that she cannot enter the guest box overlooking the course — as Princess Michael of Kent is guest of honour that day. Princess Push cannot of course stand La Freebiana, whom she looks down upon as an utterly vulgar arriviste!*

HALLO! **THE Curse of Brian, cont... Sweet little Jane Ward, former love of the heir to the throne, is more determined than ever to be the first ex-royal *amour* to write a book about their tender moments. So far she has refused all offers, but now she is broke and the bailiffs are after her (see recent *Eyes*).**

Jane rightly complains that publishers only seem to be interested in the size of Brian's willie. But Buckingham Palace can heave a huge sigh of relief, for Jane has chosen a reputable London publisher for her genteel memoir... none other than that distinguished *homme de lettres*, Mr John Blake, former pop writer of the *Sun* and ex-editor of the *People*.

Mr Blake, who publishes unauthorised "quickie" biogs of pop and TV stars, gallantly assures the impoverished Jane that he is, naturally, not remotely interested in the size of the royal member.

HALLO! *LOVABLE home secretary Michael Howard was certainly one of the most fervent fans of President Nelson Mandela on his recent visit. The Marquesa was impressed when visiting the home office last week by a very touching tribute from Michael's minions to the great man. A large poster of Nelson had been stuck up, most prominently, with Michael's witty slogan: PRISON WORKS.*

HALLO! *THANK God the heir to the throne will be soon be getting some sound PR advice when the current director of the Press Complaints Commission, Mark Bolland, moves into Brian's St James' Palace offices this autumn.*

Fortunately not too big a gap will be left at Lord Wakeham's PCC, for charming Mark's job will be divided into separate parts — one of which will be taken over the equally charming Guy Black, I understand.

Guy, who currently labours for PR guru Sir Tim Bell, is clearly the most highly qualified chap to step into Mark Bolland's shoes as he is (a) Mark Bolland's flatmate, and (b) was special adviser to Lord Wakeham, now chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, when he was secretary of state for energy.

A splendidly snug arrangement. And if anyone suggests there is a conflict of interest, I shall complain to the PCC immediately!

HALLO! UNQUESTIONABLY the society wedding of the year was that of Mr Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne and Miss Sheryl Failes, captivatingly recorded in a magazine called *Hello!*, or something similar.

Le tout Angleterre was there: Mr Terry Venables, the former England football coach, half the England soccer squad as well as distinguished broadcasters Mr Chris Evans and Mr Danny Baker.

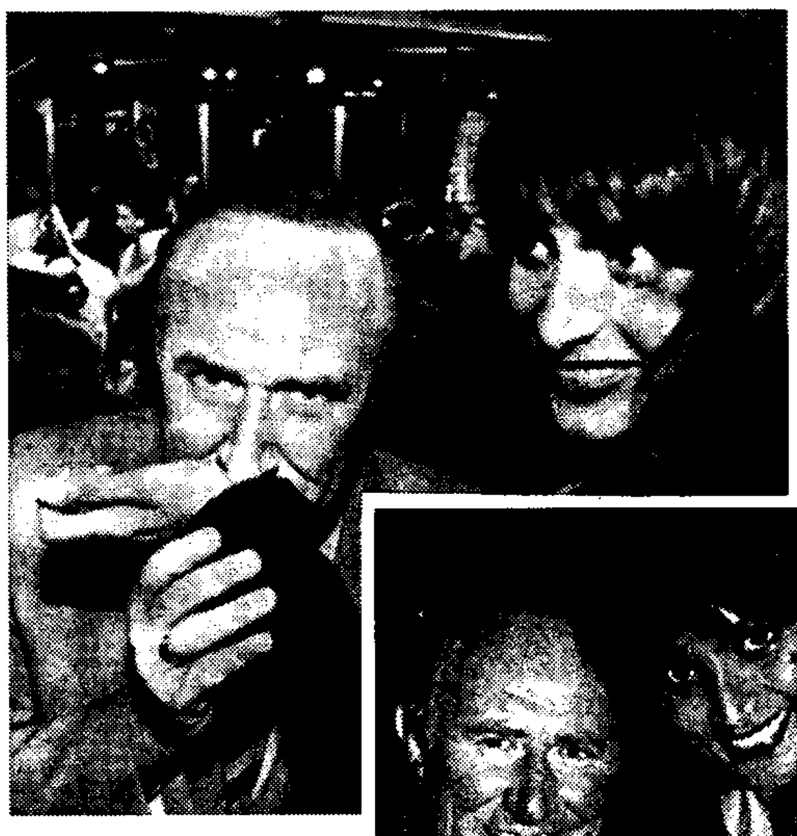
"Darling, I don't recognise nobody," says an absurd person calling herself the "Marquesa" de Varela from the magazine. "So we ask, is OK to take picture of Gazza in the toilet — an' the man, he say, yes!"

Thus was born the tasteful wedding snap that touched a nation's heart: Mr Gazza, champagne flute in hand, at the pissoir.

However, this very same de Varela person recently ordered an underling to ring your heartwarming column to invite *moi*, the real Marquesa, to luncheon. *Noblesse oblige*, one was forced to accept. Then silence... Alas, these days, the lower orders have no manners!

HALLO! WITH Diana, Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York detained on important matters of state in the South of France, it falls to the Marquesa to stamp out an appalling rumour that threatens the very concept of hereditary monarchy.

The charming likeness between fresh-faced, auburn-haired "Major" James Hewitt and fresh-faced Prince Harry is simply a happy coincidence. "Major" Hewitt and the princess, we are told, were intimate



"He used to be a baggage handler at Heathrow"

from 1986 to 1991. Harry was born in September 1984.

In fact Hewitt first met Diana five years earlier — at a polo match in 1981, before her marriage. As Anna Pasternak puts it in her touching *Princess in Love*: "It was as if, slowly but surely, unseen hands were pushing him through life towards her..."

But the Marquesa's girlfriend (who has seen James naked) once asked the former cavalry officer if he were the father of Harry. James, ever the gentleman, didn't even deign to reply. Clearly, that should nail such idle talk!

HALLO! **UNSEEN hands, however, seem to be pushing the fates of James Hewitt and his Boswell, Anna Pasternak, further apart. James has suddenly snapped out of his suicidal depression (see *Eyes passim*) and is in rip-roaring form.**

Rather surprisingly for someone who has been complaining about lack of funds, the "Major" is once again playing polo, a very pricey sport. It would be most indelicate to ask where this loot came from as Hewitt and Anna deny he got any cash for telling her how he shagged the princess. Yet it is a question James may soon have to answer in court, for darling Pasternak is suing the *Daily Mail* for asking: IS THIS THE MOST REVILED WOMAN IN BRITAIN?

Poor James lives in terror that he will be subpoenaed by either side — something the wretched rag certainly plans to do. Anna, meanwhile, is upset about the coolness between herself and James. Indeed, during the filming on his recent "interview", while the traitor was describing his passion for the princess, La Pasternak suddenly burst into tears. All very embarrassing.

HALLO! **ANDREW "Brillo Pad" Neill is in sparkling form on his new Radio 4 programme, *Soapbox*. "Have you noticed something about footballers' wives and girlfriends?" he says, unable to suppress a snigger. "*They all look the same!*"**

How unlike the deliciously varied escorts of Andrew himself...

IN THE TEAROOM

POOR Brian Mawhinney is in for another carpeting this week. Already in the doghouse for making a complete chump out of Hezza at the launch of the *Road to Ruin* cod manifesto, he has now allowed a cash-for-lunch scandal to develop over the Premier Club fundraising wheeze.

The party chairman would, of course, be forgiven all if recent press reports that central office's £17 million overdraft had been entirely paid back and that the party had a healthy election fighting fund were remotely true. In fact the energetic fundraising efforts of Lord Harris and Johnson Mathey boss David Davies have met with only partial success.

The largest single donation has been £4 million — peanuts compared to Wafic Said's £20 million bequest to Oxford, a little pot of money central office had been eyeing greedily for some time. Getting Said to cough up would have been perhaps possible only with the enthusiastic support of Lady Thatcher, something upon which the present administration can no longer rely.

A sum close to £6 million has come in from South Africa, and about £10 million has been raised from other sources. But much of this money has gone on running costs in a year which has seen public company donations down by an average of 30 percent and hard pressed constituency associations unwilling or unable to pay their tithes to the national organisation.

Central office accountants have therefore had to reduce the party overdraft with the Royal Bank of Scotland by complex debt rescheduling and mortgage arrangements, all of which leave the Tories still in the red. For the election campaign, Tory managers will be relying on the tobacco lobby to give valuable free poster sites — something Tony Blair is presently being advised to prevent, either by threatening massive retaliation against the smoking barons if he wins, or by some sly backtracking on Labour's policy of a total advertising ban.

Meanwhile the party chairman will be expected to veto yet another crackpot stunt dreamed up by one of his callow lieutenants — inviting Premier Club supremo John Beckwith's half-witted nightclubbing niece Tamara to lead a campaign to secure the yoof vote.

'Urquhart'

A FORTNIGHT ago Labour backbenchers were joking that if they were allowed a chance of voting in the shadow cabinet elections, it would be for a list drawn up by the "dear leader". Two weeks on and the joke had miraculously transmogrified into reality.

Frantic efforts were made by Labour whips to save Harriet Harman from a baying mob of backwoods backbenchers. This, despite the fact that few even in the whips' office would willingly vote for her under any normal circumstances.

As it became clear that the "Save Harpy" campaign risked being derailed by Welsh speaking leftwinger Ann Clwyd, it was first put about by the whips that "Clwyd would not be standing" — which came as something of a surprise to her as she was already out canvassing support.

As truculent backbenchers made it known that they would rather vote for the likes of Mildred Gordon than Harman, John Prescott was shunted out to force them into line. That was until Tony Blair intervened in the tube strike — on behalf of management — at which point the fuming Prescott abandoned the "Save Harpy" campaign to its fate. In desperation Labour whips turned to loyalist women such as Llin Golding, priming them to stand as spoilers for Ann Clwyd if necessary.

Meanwhile "new" Labour's "irritant of the year", Campaign Group supremo Alan Simpson, was recently stopped in the lobby by an aerated Alastair Campbell. "Do you know how many times you have attacked the Labour party so far this year?" demanded the piqued Campbell. Before Simpson had a chance to reply, Campbell produced a computer print out listing the number of articles Simpson had contributed to leftie papers and the *Sun* alike.

IN A desperate attempt to salvage a few votes the Scottish Tories have launched a campaign warning that self-government would destroy Scottish jobs. To back this up, they are distributing thousands of glossy brochures.

A glance at the small print tells another story. The brochures are printed by Echo & Express in Exeter, England.

Meanwhile, the Tories are also sticking up posters all over Scotland. One promises "New Jobs" with the Union and "Nae Jobs" with self-government. Another says: "As jobs go south — will you still have yours?"

Maybe they were referring to the south of Ireland. For the posters were printed in Dublin, capital of Eire — which is, er, a small self-governing country that broke away from the UK...

JUNIOR minister Andrew Mitchell has been making a fuss about the number of parliamentary questions asked about the Child Support Agency and the American computer company which handles its data, EDS.

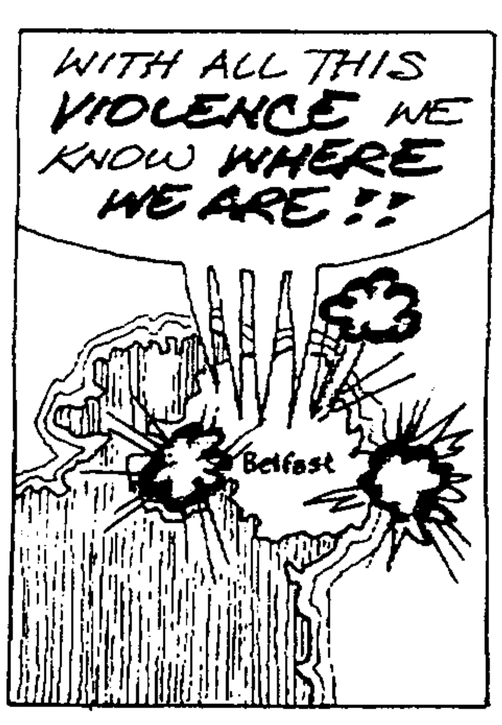
Mitchell recently berated Lib Dem whips, claiming that their social security spokeswoman Liz Lynne had been tabling too many questions. He even collared the startled Lynne and sneeringly accused her of being "the campaigners' stooge".

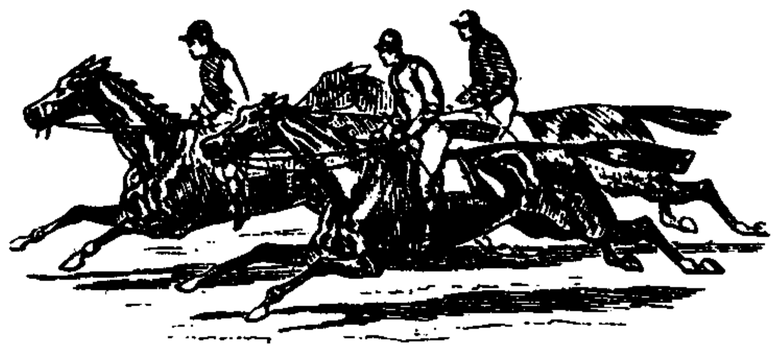
Perhaps it escaped his notice that of 69 CSA questions tabled in the past six weeks many have been asked by members of his own party: Jim Pawsey, John Biffen and even rightwinger Neil Hamilton, all obviously the "stooges" of campaigners, then.

Meanwhile the data protection registrar has been looking into the complaints that EDS has been retaining data on some individuals long after their CSA cases were closed. But as the registrar confirmed, under the data protection Act "a government department shall not be liable to prosecution under this act..." — which means the CSA (and EDS) are untouchable as an executive agency of the department of social security.

Some comfort to the 3.8 million people the CSA admits it still holds on file...

'Backbiter'





Sporting Life

THE announcement that next year's Derby is to be run once again on a Saturday, rather than revert to its traditional Wednesday slot, has dismayed racing enthusiasts.

Such distinguished figures as Peter O'Sullevan and Major Dick Hern are united in their belief that this decision is purely a face-saving exercise — and the faces being saved belong to senior employees of the Jockey Club-owned Racecourse Holdings Trust, the very organisation that has consistently claimed that it is uniquely qualified to safeguard racing's traditions.

When RHT took over the running of the Derby back in 1994 it was quick to arrange a lavish new sponsorship deal with Vodafone — in return for which the upwardly mobile phone company has its logo emblazoned on practically everything from the grass in the Epsom paddock to the lavatory paper in the Queen's Stand.

The quid pro quo was to change the day of the great race from the customary first Wednesday in June to the following Saturday. This, so we were assured by brusque Epsom director Edward Gillespie, would help boost betting turnover and apparently put the Derby "on the same footing as other major sporting events".

But both the 1995 and 1996 Saturday Derbys were distinctly underwhelming occasions with falling turnover, dwindling TV figures and much diminished crowds. This year's race had to be sent off at an unfashionable 2.25pm to avoid a clash with the start of Euro 96. Yet within hours of the event, Gillespie was bullishly declaring that his board had embarked on a three-year commercial experiment and that there could be no concession to "short termism".

This insensitive and pig-headed approach should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Gillespie's record at Cheltenham where he presides with apparent satisfaction over the National Hunt Festival. That's the meeting where long-suffering patrons are compelled to pay £50 a day to be jammed into the stands like Japanese commuters in the Tokyo rush hour, and where they can expect to wait for up to an hour to get a drink at one of the understaffed and over-priced bars — and then stand in 20 deep queues for the loo.

One of Gillespie's first acts on taking over at Epsom was to cordon off a section of the old Tattersalls Enclosure, rename it the Club and charge punters £50 a head to get in. With unsurprisingly few takers in 1995 he had to cut the price by a tenner this summer.

To assist him in these marketing triumphs, Gillespie has been able to call upon the services of one David Hillyard, who presumably learnt all he knows about horse racing during his years spent with Whitbread and Debenhams. And from this June, Epsom has had even more private sector know-how at its disposal in the shape of new course director, the intriguingly named Sue Ellen, who gleaned her intimate understanding of the Turf from her previous experiences working with, er, BUPA.

When Epsom was up for sale two years ago there were two other applications on the table. One of them was led by Stan Clarke, the former plumber turned millionaire racehorse owner, who has made a spectacular and customer friendly success of running Uttoxeter and Newcastle. The other was a consortium involving Robert Sangster and the broadcasting company Sunset and Vine. But the word from the Jockey Club's headquarters in Portman Square was that both of these bids were "too spivvish" to be serious contenders.

This year's Derby winner Shaamit runs next on 27 July, but of the 19 horses he beat only two have yet managed to win another race. Comparisons between the form on the course and the form of the Epsom management are already being drawn.

'Major Bonkers'

NOOKS and CORNERS

ACCIDENTS will happen. Rhindmuir House was a handsome five bay Georgian house with a round Tuscan porch. It was listed, category "B", and stood in Baillieston to the east of Glasgow and just south of the grim peripheral estate at Easterhouse. It was all the more precious as it was a rare historic building in an area devastated by post-war housing and criss-crossed by motorways; new housing was built nearby. And now it is demolished.

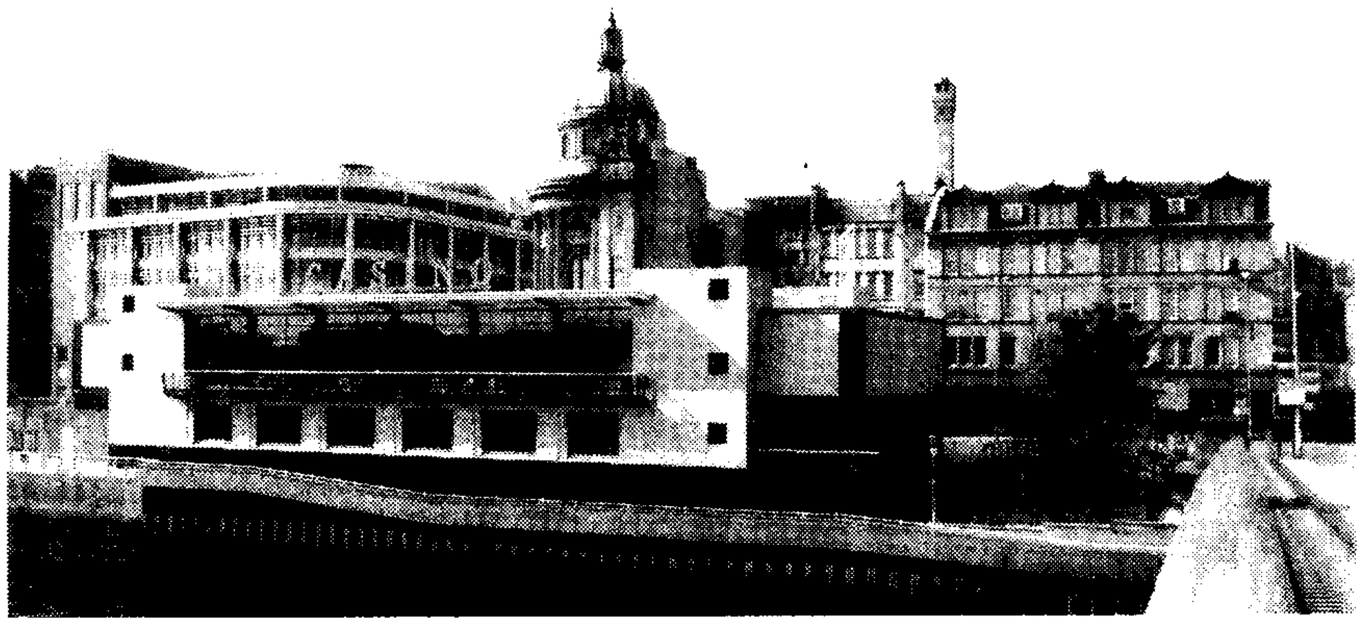
In 1995 Rhindmuir House was damaged when it went on fire, arson suspected. The insurers declined to pay for repair and the owner neglected to protect the building. Even so, the walls remained sound and the Glasgow Building Preservation Trust expressed interest in acquiring and restoring the house. However, the owner, Mr Wilson Miller of Cumbernauld, applied for planning permission and listed building consent to demolish the house and to build a new dwelling on the site. Both were refused by Glasgow's planning committee last month.

On 1 July Mr Wilson was attempting to clear out rubble from the site when, oh dear, his bulldozer went out of control and demolished half of the facade. The rest of the building was obviously now unsafe and has since been demolished. Coincidentally, a member of the planning department was threatened by the accident-prone workmen on site. It is all very unfortunate — but, as I say, accidents will happen.

Accidents often happen to listed buildings in Glasgow. Sometimes they "go on fire", as they say. Sometimes a bulldozer goes out of control. That is what happened a few years ago at Virginia Court, a rare Georgian survival in the Merchant City, when it was owned by Mr Barry Clapham, the distinguished developer, who had interesting plans for the buildings. A bulldozer slipped and brought the south side of the court down. The site remains empty.

So what is to happen in this case? Will Mr Miller be prosecuted for the illegal demolition of a listed building? Better, perhaps, if no development is permitted for the site other than a rebuilding of Rhindmuir House. That might make Mr Miller and others like him take more care to employ only experienced bulldozer drivers.

NOT that the city of Glasgow always sets the best example. After all, when the old Royal Exchange was recently converted into the Gallery of Modern Art by the council, a reflecting glass intervention by the French artist, Niki de St Phalle, was installed in the pediment of David Hamilton's Grand Corinthian portico without listed building consent. Oops! Of course the necessary retrospective consents were soon granted: Glasgow is the Arts Council's "City of Architecture and Design" in 1999 after all.



But my picture shows not a boring old building but an exciting new one. As the bold illuminated letters on the top helpfully indicate, it is the Stakis Riverboat Casino, a marble-clad luxurious emporium for innocent family leisure pursuits designed by Creanor Associates. On its prominent site on the Broomielaw by the River Clyde, right next to the George V Bridge, it is just the sort of forward-looking, innovatory, sophisticated and imaginative new building the City of Architecture and Design needs to enter the new millennium with pride and confidence.

Sad, therefore, that some mean-spirited Glaswegians have expressed surprise that such a building for such a purpose should ever have been erected on such a prestigious site where, indeed, old wharves and warehouses were cleared to give the Clyde a proper embankment. And I fear it is true that the casino now blocks the view of J.J. Burnet's noble Clyde Navigation Trust building. But the building was developed by the company founded by Mr Rio Stakis, the well-known hotelier, who has done so much for the city and whose hotels are bywords for... hotels.

And of course the new casino received full planning permission, although few seem to have noticed or commented on the planning application. This is a little strange, considering that a building on this site ran contrary to previous planning policies and that many might have felt that a new, shameless and prominent gambling den may not be the best image for the City of Architecture and Design. Naturally, the director of planning cannot see every one of thousands of planning applications, so that ones which are important or potentially controversial are normally flagged up for him to see. Rumour has it that, in this case, the Stakis planning application was not flagged up and so went through the system like a hot knife through butter. Odd, that — but an unfortunate oversight, of course.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

The Germans around me greeted each player with his name, on a crescendo. I recognised Gascoigne's medieval hair and portly stomach, and Tony Adams's long, strong legs. There is a difference between men in the flesh and men on the screen. They are both more solid and more vulnerable, flesh, blood and muscle, their bodies massive, their faces a blur. The English strip, which I had feared would be designer gloom, like the spate of battleship grey in the late Eighties, was in fact beautiful, like floating shadows on the bright emerald-gold grass, the colour of Monet's shades. And Seaman was resplendent, a striding scarlet lord, entirely comfortable in his beauty.

A.S. BYATT
Observer

For as long as consciousness slept, the dream lived. But in my dream all was silence, and when I woke I heard the same silence, and knew the dream was past.

How strange that the silence should be the only real part of the match to carry over into the dream. Amid all the extraordinary sounds that filled Wembley Stadium last night, that is what I remember most — the silences...

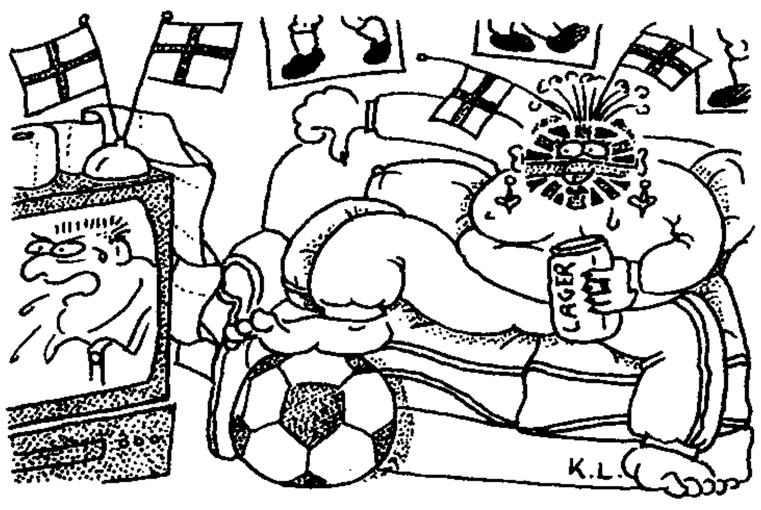
Now, when I think again of last night's match, I ponder once more on what was real and what was not. Were we wrong to hope for so much? Surely not.

KATE BATTERSBY
Evening Standard

When England lost the women wept for the men, not for themselves. The men's feelings were the opposite of compassion, dwelling in a region of the psyche beyond conscience and consciousness.

GERMAINE GREER
Independent

The crowd-song, on the other hand, I began to enjoy. Up went the words in coloured bulbs on the rim of the



pit we were in. *It's coming. It's coming. It's coming home. Football's coming home.* **Sung with a wave of English soft sentiment. An extraordinary mixture, my critical mind thought as I swayed to the rhythm, of delayed sexual climax** — *it's coming, it's coming* — **and infantile nostalgia** — *it's coming home.* **Like the tear-inducing moment at the end of** *Peter Pan*, **when the children return to the empty nursery or the obscene British Airways commercial of the rock-a-bye-baby businessman. Boyhood nostalgia in every sense.**

A.S. BYATT
Observer

Every woman in Europe should have watched *Euro 96*, watched it and wept, not because Germany keeps beating better-looking teams, but because the phenomenon illustrates just what women are up against when they try to mitigate the maleness of the world.

GERMAINE GREER
Independent

Thanks to them, we have known an intensity of happiness we might otherwise not have experienced.

They made us cry for joy. They touched our lives, and brought us together.

They made us better people for a while. And if that seems fanciful, then you weren't there. You weren't one of us in June 1996.

KATE BATTERSBY
Evening Standard

The Germans scored, the Germans roared, and composed themselves. I returned to my narrative terror of penalties.

A.S. BYATT
Observer

I know perfectly well where I was in 1966 on the occasion of that great victory — munching tomato sandwiches at Chatsworth, while the Duchess explained to an American guest that their scrumptious flavour came from being self-sown in the sewage of the great house. Was there a match in 1976? In June 1986 I watched the World Cup Final in the wild of Turkish Armenia, just after failing to prevent a mob of incest-corrupted peasants from garrotting a fine young bitch they claimed to be rabid, and recall nothing of the match: the bitch is unforgettable. Shall I remember in my dotage where I was in June 1996?

BRIAN SEWELL
Evening Standard

Contributors: Everyone, H. Robin, J. Moore, D. Putnam, I. Simpson, A. Schouvalott.

£10 paid for entries

ITV

Annual Report And Accounts (BBC Publications)
Murder One (BBC2
Olympic Grandstand (BBC1)

THE BBC's annual report and accounts — the licence-payer's yearly greetings from the planet Birt — make much reference to what terrific value for money the BBC is. So it's a pity the skimpy booklet itself works out at 10p a page, should you take up the corporation's invitation to buy it for £10 from all good bookshops. Save your dosh.

The best bit in it is a picture on the title page, which reveals what a royal charter actually looks like. First you get the Queen's full name and titles and then the wonderfully quaint phrase: "To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting!"

Page 81, dealing with remuneration, reveals that Mr Birt himself is getting the best presents: £299,495 this year. There has been much unfavourable comment about the level of the tax expert's income, but at least the DG has to endure hatred and scrutiny in exchange for his wad. The real scandal of the accounts is the revelation that someone else (names are never specified) trousered £240,000. This presumably, on the basis of hierarchy, is Bob Phillis, the pisspoor and anonymous deputy DG. There is also a strong suggestion that the recipient of £190,000 per annum is the hopeless toady Ron Neil. Here is the real waste of licence fees.

There are also two large hostages to fortune. Birt has identified the sitcom *Men Behaving Badly* as a personal favourite show. The last programme he singled out in this way — *Have I Got News For You?* — instantly took the opportunity to be as rude about the DG as they liked on the grounds that he could hardly can the show now. How long, then, before the scripts of *Men Behaving Badly* become samizdat for anti-Birtists, with Gary and Tony dividing their lives into Sex and Lager Directorates?

A more serious timebomb is primed on page 42, where the report blandly states: "The BBC makes every effort to ensure that all its programmes are fair and impartial, and meet standards of good taste and decency." This is either sloppy writing or a terrible corporate surrender. In the past, the BBC has promised only that news programmes will be impartial and that balance will be achieved across the overall range of programmes. To promise that each individual show will be fair and decent just invites the Curteises and the McWhirters to head to the high court clutching a copy of the annual report. And what, for example, about someone who finds Birt's beloved *Men Behaving Badly* in poor taste?

Conveniently the real external pressures — and self-imposed internal idiocies — of the BBC were illustrated in last week's trio of media rows surrounding the corporation.

Take the spat about the integration of the World Service (separately funded by the foreign office) into the licence fee-funded BBC. In fact, although it is a heresy in Middle England to say so, World Service programmes are not, with the possible exception of its classy drama productions, of very high standard. Its English-language service is a notorious haven of producers and presenters who — for reasons professional, medical or recreational — were unable to sustain a career at Broadcasting House. They are driven further to despair by letters from the near-fascist ex-pats who form the core audience complaining that the schedules are increasingly leftwing or trendy.

Former hostages John McCarthy and Brian Keenan say the World Service kept them going during their incarceration in Beirut but, with respect to those exceptional men, the drivetime show on BBC Radio Solent would have seemed a lifeline in the plight they were in. Even so, a smarter PR operator than Birt would have understood that messing with the World Service is the broadcasting equivalent of shooting Bambi.

The fuss about the proliferation of sport on the BBC during the Olympics — there will be almost no alternative to Atlanta on either channel — is trickier. It was clearly foreseeable that this one-track programming would infuriate a section of the audience: women and the kind of men who got a sick-note from school games. Yet the schedule is a direct consequence of the BBC's corporate strategy on sport.

Forced by satellite competition to bid ever higher to retain rights — the Olympics cost it £30 million — the BBC then has to maximise its coverage in order to justify expenditure. You might say the corporation should simply not compete for sport when prices get so high, but loss of major sports would severely weaken the claim to levy the licence fee on, particularly, working class males. You begin to see that being director-general is not the easy job it is sometimes made out to be by some of Birt's detractors. You certainly work for your £299,495.

But the blow-up over the decision of the BBC2 schedulers to interrupt the 23-part *Murder One* for three weeks, on the very brink of the murder verdict, results from simple stupidity. The programmers can only be Catholics if they can contemplate pulling out at this point. *Murder One*'s 3.4 million BBC2 viewers are, largely, the kind of opinionated ABC1s who have caused so much trouble for Radio 4 and Radio 3 controllers in recent times. Taking them on over this — BBC2 had to restore *Murder One* to the schedules within 24 hours — was simply dumb.

The annual report and accounts reveals that 73,790 letters and 515,382 phone calls were received by the BBC from its audience last year. Birt's recent hideous ability to attract bad publicity suggests the figure will be far higher next year.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

ITN has been celebrating its 63 per cent rise in pre-tax profits — to a record £15.3 million — by cutting its charges to ITV companies. As ITN boss Stewart Purvis explained: "They have been consistent supporters through difficult times and they should enjoy the benefits of what has been achieved."

What about ITN's pensioners, who have also been "consistent supporters through difficult times", especially during recent years when the company saved about £11 million by not paying its contributions into the pension fund? Will they be enjoying the benefits of ITN's largesse now that happy days are here again?

Er, no. Although the pensions ombudsman has accused the ITN trustees of "maladministration of the fund" and ruled that they should restore the annual increase to which pensioners are entitled, the trustees are now going to law to challenge his decision.

And where is ITN finding the money for legal fees to pursue its mean-spirited campaign against the pensioners? Why, from the pension fund, of course.

IT HAS been a busy fortnight for Rupert Murdoch. Amid the usual flurry of acquisitions and joint venture announcements, two deals are particularly disturbing.

News Corp's purchase (for a very reasonable $2.5 billion) of the New World TV stations vastly increases its market share in America, especially when combined with the existing 20th Century Fox TV network. A little noticed part of the acquisition is that New World owns half of the company which produces *Premiere*, the highly successful New York based film magazine, which has extended its global reach with franchised international editions, including EMAP's British version.

Obviously there is no question that *Premiere*'s hacks (who are hardly renowned for exercising critical judgement at present) will be ordered to say how wonderful Murdoch's films and TV shows are compared to those of his competitors. But if they want longterm careers at the magazine, they'll no doubt be careful to do so anyway.

Rupert's film interests have expanded to such an extent that even the *Times* failed to give his megalomania full credit when assessing the New World deal. "The acquisition came the day after News Corp learned that its effort to buy MGM/UA, the Hollywood studio, had failed," the paper reported (18 July). News Corp's solo bid did indeed fail, but happily Murdoch controls 15 percent of the shares of Australia's Channel 7 which backed the successful offer from MGM/UA's management.

The Digger will therefore have a certain influence, and regulatory bodies worldwide will need to watch carefully to ensure that 20th Century Fox and MGM/UA don't start coordinating their sales and marketing to the detriment of less powerful players. Presumably the monopolies and mergers commission (MMC) and the office of fair trading (OFT) here would welcome vocal support from the likes of Michael Heseltine and Tony Blair for the difficult job they have to do when faced by this sort of complex cross-media ownership.

TONIGHT
WITH
RICHARD MADELEY
& JUDY FINNIGAN
OUR FIRST GUEST WAS A MAN WHO GOT AWAY WITH MURDER...
AND HE SET THE TONE OF THE SERIES...
AS WE'VE BEEN GETTING AWAY WITH IT EVERY WEEK SINCE!

IT ISN'T only television executives who are getting haughty lectures from Bruce Gyngell, the ultra-pious boss of Tyne Tees TV.

St Thomas's school in Battersea, which charges £4,000 a term, is used to receiving similar advice from both Bruce and his wife Kathy in respect of the two young Gyngells who are pupils at the school. Not content with their eldest already being a full year ahead at their insistence, they also demanded extra teaching out of hours. When the school refused, teachers received "the most outrageous letters" they had ever seen from Mrs G.

The headmistress then warned that the boys might be "withdrawn forthwith" if the Gyngells did not desist from their imperious antics — whereupon Kathy announced that they were "moving to the *country* anyway" and wouldn't be attending again.

Unfortunately the Gyngell parents thereby made themselves liable to "notice payments" of one full term's fees for each child. Since the Gyngells have refused to cough up, the school is left with no choice but to sue. The Gyngells are now threatening *to countersue, claiming "lack of attention"* to their youngest.

BIRTSPEAK

AS the painful process of shedding personnel from BBC's World Service begins, an ad appears in the BBC staff magazine *Ariel* for — of all things — a new chief personnel officer:

"The job holder is responsible to MDWS, and contributes to the development of World Service and Corporate policies so that these meet the needs of the BBC and the World Service and are effectively implemented. You would be responsible for providing, within the framework of those policies, personnel services and advice to managers and staff in the World Service; for the control and coordination of all aspects of the World Service personnel function, procedures, systems, and services to provide the best service to managers in order to meet their needs; and for managing teams of personnel professionals, including Equal Opportunities staff, their support teams, a recruitment team, and Beaumont House, to deliver this service."

EDUCATION NEWS

EDINBURGH University's former assistant finance director has been banned from practising as an accountant after facing three charges of professional misconduct in his work at the university.

Part of Kendrick Macpherson's misconduct was over payment to two companies whose directors were some of the most highly respected figures in the world of university finance.

One charge related to a £370,000 cheque for the university from the Mid Lothian health board which Macpherson placed in a Bank of Scotland deposit account. His colleagues were unaware of the existence of the account for which he was sole signatory.

Macpherson also authorised the university to pay £20,000 indirectly to two companies controlled by his business associates for work they had not done. Half the money was transferred to a company, Avalon Quaestorial, in which his wife was later a 50 percent shareholder. There was no suggestion either company knew of Macpherson's financial impropriety.

ALL ABOARD THE GRAVY TRAIN!

WITH only two months to go until *Punch* magazine reappears on the news-stands, the nation's dentists are in a state of feverish anticipation. Some of the loucher hacks from old Fleet Street are pretty excited too, having been promised "bawbees all round" by the immense (*shurely "immensely talented"?*) editor, Peter McHackey.

But what of the potential advertisers, who will ultimately decide the fate of McHackey's clattering gravy train? The editor is taking no chances. He has produced a glossy "advertising special", embellished with a huge painting of 75 of London's top admen, who are described in a fawning caption as "the in-crowd at Groucho's". We must hope that this shameless flattery will pay dividends.

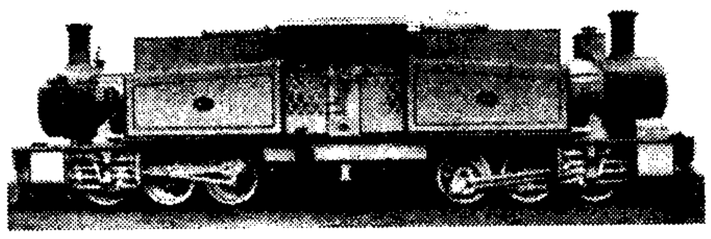
The brochure also includes a letter from McLie setting out his views on the mysterious business of humour. "Personally," he reveals, "I get more laughs out of the *Daily Telegraph* than from either *Viz* or *Private Eye*." How odd, then, that only a few weeks ago he despatched a minion to Newcastle to beg the *Viz* team to provide him with a weekly comic strip.

"Laughter," the editor concludes, "is like sex." And, as *Eye* readers will recall, McHackey knows all about the latter. One of his favourite seduction methods, when visiting the flat of a comely young hackette, is to lie down stark naked, wave his legs in the air and call out "Are you ready for me, lassie?" If he applies this technique to *Punch*, editorial meetings should be very lively indeed.

One man, alas, remains unamused by the new "humour magazine" — its proprietor, Harrods boss Mohamed Fayed. Unused to the baroque ways of Fleet Street, he has been shocked by McHackey's Pharaonic extravagance, such as the £130 bill for a recent lunch at Princess Di's favourite eaterie, San Lorenzo. "We have so many restaurants at Harrods," Mohamed wails. "Can't you use those?"

Apparently not. McLie, fuelling the habits of a lifetime, finds it essential to discuss editorial strategy over pricey food and wine late into the afternoon with thirsty cronies like former *Daily Mirror* editor Mike Molloy, bow-tied *bon vivant* David Bradbury and Alexander "Chiantishire" Chancellor, all of whom have been hauled on to the payroll for this great adventure.

But who is going to do the donkey-work of ensuring the mag actually appears every week? As one *Punch* veteran comments: "This gravy train has 10 buffet-cars but no engine." Never mind: at least those ample lunches should cushion the shock when it finally crashes into the buffers...



SIGNAL FAILURES

A CLOSE shave on the decrepit West Coast line raises questions about how safety is treated on the newly fragmented railway.

On 10 July the northbound Manchester Pullman sped through Watford Junction, where it was meant to pick up passengers, because the train's brakes had failed. Luckily the line ahead was clear, otherwise a spectacular collision would have occurred — almost certainly involving loss of life.

When privatisation was being prepared, the *Eye* and others warned that safety could be compromised because responsibility would be fragmented and there would be financial pressure on various parties not to discuss safety as openly as the unified BR had done.

When a train failed to brake in 1990, a joint inquiry was set up and everyone involved answered to the regional operating manager, who conveyed the findings to his counterparts on the three other BR regions. Who does everyone report to after this incident in 1996?

Well, the locomotive belonged to one train leasing company; the rolling stock possibly to another; the driver was employed by a train operating company; and the track and signals belonged to Railtrack. Other firms contracted to carry out maintenance may well be involved in the investigation, and each organisation will presumably have its lawyers in tow.

West Coast train operating company sent a statement to the *Eye* which read: "As it should, the train came safely to an immediate stand." But the national incident log states that it was brought to a halt at King's Langley. In other words, the train ran forward out of control *for more than four miles*. If West Coast really believes the train came safely to an immediate stand then it seems we are already witnessing that unwillingness to confront the facts and discuss the issues openly that was predicted months ago.

COMMUTERS from Essex wouldn't deny that train operators are responding to customer demand, but the responses would baffle most businessmen.

Regulars on the 7am from Clacton to London Liverpool Street were dismayed recently to find their train reduced to two-thirds of its previous length. The Great Eastern Railway operating company said the extra rolling stock had been switched to other lines where additional capacity was needed due to overcrowding. "Our past experience shows that any new timetable takes a few weeks to settle in, by which time some passengers will have switched trains thereby spreading the load," added the GER.

So the answer to overcrowding on one route is, er, to cause overcrowding elsewhere — no doubt at the expense of turning some passengers to other modes of transport. A normal commercial organisation would attempt to cater for extra demand but that option is not open to the GER and other rail operators because of the bureaucracy involved in building new trains.

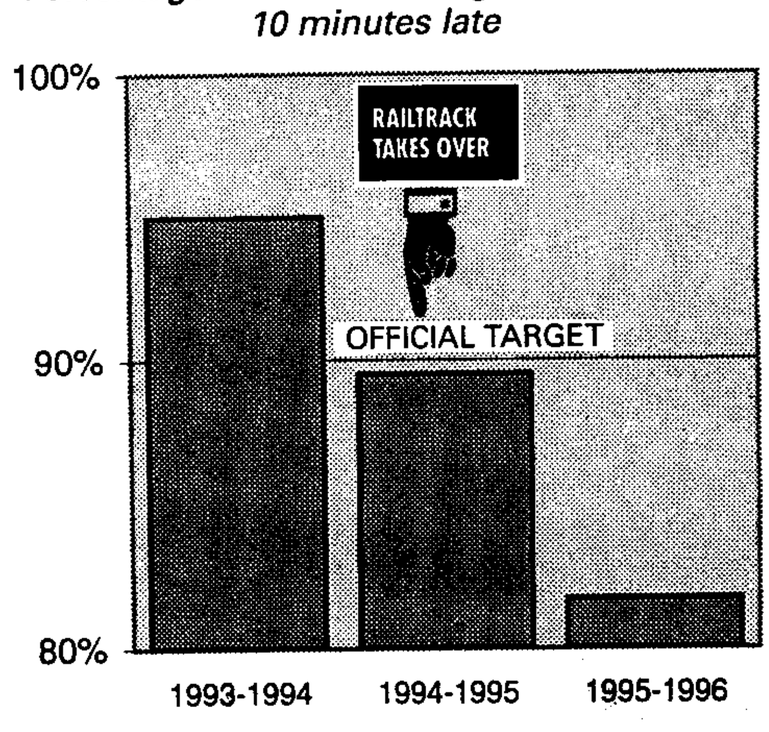
Eye readers may recall the government promising privatisation would unlock money for new trains and allow marketing whizzkids to attract more passengers. The reality is that the private train leasing companies have too weak an incentive to provide new rolling stock; operators like Stagecoach have no plans to replace their ancient trains; at least two operators are hiring carriages from railway museums for daily services; and our few remaining train factories have become specialists in tarting up old trains to fool passengers that new trains *are* being built post-privatisation after all.

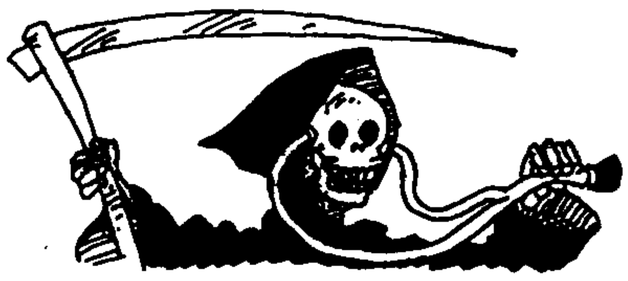
In this set-up, marketing whizzkids will be of little use — unless they're needed to gently dissuade people from using services like the 7am from Clacton.

'Dr B. Ching'

WEST COAST WATCH

Percentage of trains arriving no more than 10 minutes late





DOING THE ROUNDS

RESTRICTIVE practice is alive and kicking in the pharmacy trade.

Due to some arcane piece of legislation, patients are not allowed to have prescriptions dispensed by their GP if they live within one mile of a pharmacy; they must travel to the latter instead. This applies even if the one mile radius runs across obstacles such as a motorway or river, making for a hazardous mercy dash or a round trip of miles.

Although only 10 percent of GPs have been granted dispensing rights, 50 percent of patients wish their GP could dispense. This makes good medical sense, as the doctor knows the patient's history and can supervise the prescription, and is also cheaper. Chemists, including large chains like Lloyds and Boots, are currently given generous allowances to set up shop wherever they like thanks to the power of the pharmaceutical lobby. Yet dispensing doctors are denied the privileges of free trade and are not even allowed to sell over the counter drugs.

● HELENA DALY, the consultant haematologist sacked by **Truro's Treliske Royal hospital** in 1994 only to win her appeal in 1995 (*Eyes passim*), has yet to secure another job.

A more pressing concern is her legal fees. In her fight to get the health secretary and NHS Executive to help her win back a consultant post, she has been abandoned by her BMA barrister who allegedly acted for her on the basis of false legal assumptions. Ms Daly was then forced to consult privately, without the help of the BMA, and has currently run up legal and accounting fees of £4237.05 to discover if her unfair dismissal entitles her to reinstatement. She has now written to the BMA to ask for help with payment. Watch this space.

● A SECTION of **Halifax's Calderdale general hospital**, originally built as a 19th century poor law institution, has recently been designated for preservation as a listed building because it contains rare but obsolete Nightingale round wards, where beds are grouped around a large central column.

The listing has been well received by the trust's new chief executive, Hadyn Cook, who has used it to deflect criticism from the reduction in bed numbers that will occur when the new district general hospital opens. Beds will be cut from 600 to 500 in the new building, but any overspill can now be handily accommodated in the preservation area. The good folk of Calderdale can look forward to being treated in a medical museum well into the next millennium.

● ON A publicised community health council visit to **Winchcombe hospital**, part of **East Gloucestershire NHS trust**, a CHC member noticed that from a public corridor he could see into a lavatory where an elderly patient was sitting with her knickers down by her ankles.

Although in favour of freedom of information, he felt this may possibly have contravened the patients' charter commitment to privacy and dignity. In response, trust chief executive J.O. Hammond agreed that this was "unacceptable in principle — but there is little one can do if a patient chooses to do this." Otherwise, the visit went swimmingly....

● UNANNOUNCED visits to hospitals tend to reveal more unpalatable truths. Mental health act commissioners who visited **St Ann's psychiatric hospital, Haringey**, discovered a 22-bedded ward containing 35 patients.

Overcrowding was so severe that patients were forced to sleep on mattresses on the floor in unfurnished rooms. Others were sent home at night to find their own beds, while broken window catches allowed patients and intruders to enter and exit at will. Unsurprisingly, illicit drug abuse by patients was "a significant problem."

In addition, furniture was broken, privacy curtains were missing and some of the doors on the women's' dormitories had no locks. Haringey trust chief executive Andrew Woodhead admitted there were more patients than beds. "We will not turn away suicidal or violent patients in urgent need of care."

● THE lack of beds for the severely mentally ill is a nationwide problem (*Eyes passim*), with the **Royal College of Psychiatrists** claiming service provision is on the point of collapse.

Hospitals are accepting emergency admissions only and discharging patients far too quickly because of pressure on beds. Ten percent of consultant posts are unfilled, and an increasing number of frontline nurses and junior doctors are quitting due to unacceptable levels of violence and stress. Some hospitals are run by untrained volunteers who reject the concept of mental illness and encourage psychotic patients to stop taking their medication. As college registrar Christopher Thompson put it: "We are in deep crisis. There is a sense of desperation among psychiatrists. In some parts of the country, particularly the inner cities, the service is unsafe. We cannot run this system safely with inadequate beds."

"I remember when that used to be a theatre"

● DR RADHA Gobinder Sarker, ex director of **Glengova nursing home** in **Whitecraig's, Glasgow**, where patients were treated "like concentration camp victims" (*Eyes passim*), has been removed from the medical register. Dr Sarker admitted to failing to arrange adequate medical treatment for a woman who died of infected pressure sores, and failing to ensure standards of hygiene and that residents received adequate food and heating. The only male patient in the home, which closed in 1993, had not had a bath for two years.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

AS THE number of healthy cattle turned into toxic waste under the government's insane "cattle destructions scheme" passes the 200,000 mark, money continues to flow like water and the money-making scams multiply.

One leading contender is Bristol-based Alec Jarrett Limited, former supplier of old cows to McDonald's. Unwilling to pass up the chance of making mega-bucks, but excluded from the scheme because its supermarket customers will not allow slaughterhouses to be used for destruction work and for producing food, Jarretts has hit upon a neat solution. It has subcontracted the work to Kings of Gloucester, claiming money from the intervention board (IBEA), which is running the scheme, and splitting proceeds with its cooperative neighbour.

The only problem is that this "quota sharing" is prohibited by the IBEA, which is nevertheless still dishing out an estimated £17,500 a week to Jarretts, with the active complicity of the Meat Hygiene Service, which has approved Kings to do the actual work.

Another nose in the trough is the Guildford-based Chitty Group, whose owner Steve Chitty was once convicted of receiving stolen meat. This upstanding firm is passing its work to the Anglo-Dutch unit at Charing. Other traders regard this as especially objectionable as the Chitty Group did not handle cows immediately before the BSE crisis but now has a £17,500 a week contract to kill 200 a week. Meanwhile RG Meats in Bedfordshire, which used to handle at least 50 cows a week, has had its trade siphoned off and is rapidly going broke.

Not so Irish "godfather" Larry Goodman, owner of Anglo Beef Processors, who is doing so well destroying cattle in his Shrewsbury plant (*Eye* 902) he is planning to open his mothballed unit at Nuneaton to produce beef for supermarket shelves, which would otherwise have been produced at Shrewsbury. Similarly the Simms Group, another lottery winner which has dedicated its Carnaby plant to destroying cows, is to reactivate its mothballed plant at Boston.

FOR the owners of the 215 slaughterhouses not included in the destruction scheme it has not been a good week. Not only are they bleeding to death from having their trade siphoned off, but many are now having to find an extra £8 million between them to pay off meat inspection bills levied by the Meat Hygiene Service (*Eyes passim*).

Led by a Widnes pork producer, Sammy Morphet, the slaughterhouses have been spearheading a campaign to show that the fees from the Most Hated Service are illegal and that the vets employed by the service are worse than useless. However, last week, Mr Justice Popplewell, the establishment's friend, disagreed and ordered the fees to be paid.

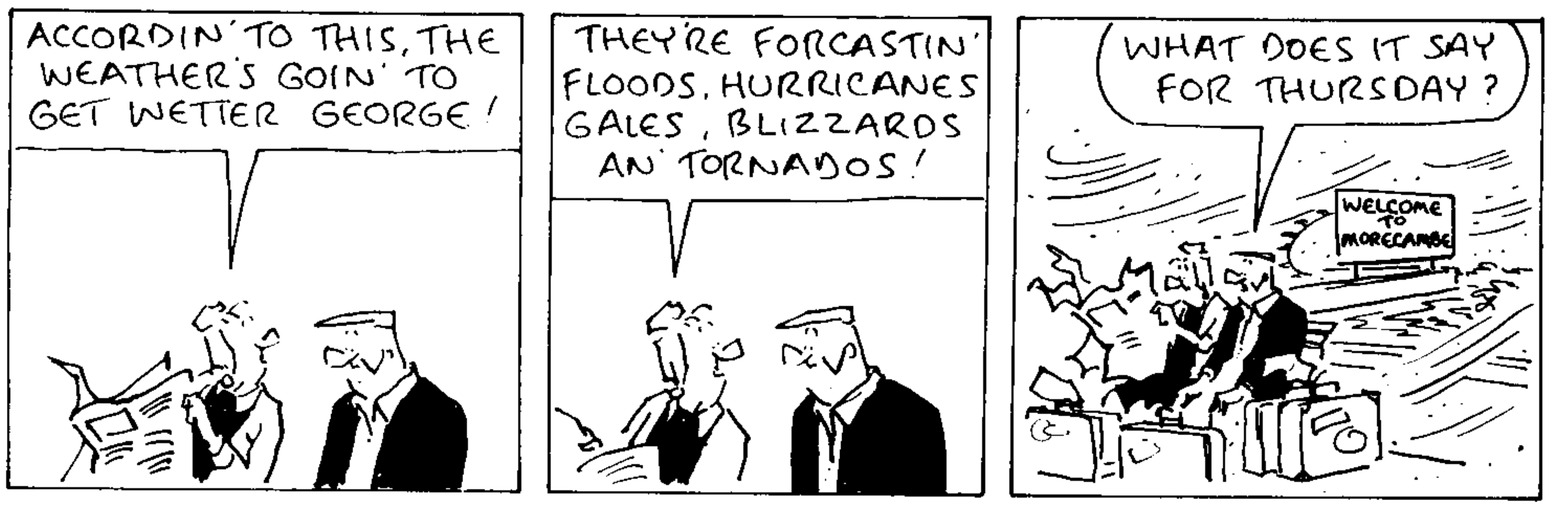
No doubt Popplewell was entirely happy that 22 MHS staff have been formally disciplined and "retrained" after leaving potentially BSE-infected spinal cords in inspected beef carcases. Nevertheless, it is clear that the "retraining" is bearing fruit. One keen vet was quick to spot a spinal cord left in a carcase in a Home Counties abattoir. But he was somewhat less than keen to take action when it was pointed out that the animal was not a cow but rather a large sow, to which the law does not apply.

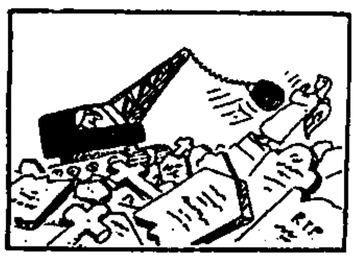
Undeterred, the same vet was later found demanding that non-edible offal should be stained with a bright blue dye — another legal requirement when handling cattle. He had not noticed that the offal did not come within the staining regulations — it had come from sheep.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


ACCORDIN' TO THIS, THE WEATHER'S GOIN' TO GET WETTER GEORGE!
THEY'RE FORCASTIN' FLOODS, HURRICANES GALES, BLIZZARDS AN' TORNADOS!
WHAT DOES IT SAY FOR THURSDAY?
WELCOME TO MORECAMBE



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 26 July 1996

OUT OF BOUNDS

LIVERPOOL chief executive Peter Bounds continues to preside over a city which owes more than a billion pounds and has the highest council tax in the country.

Given the high charges (and his six-figure salary) do council taxpayers enjoy a five-star service? Those seeking £18 *million* compensation from the city after tripping over its disgracefully maintained pavements certainly don't think so.

In such dire circumstances it is often tempting to find a sacrificial lamb lower down the hierarchy. Thus last February Bounds suspended Kerry Rickards, director of organisational services, and ordered an investigation into alleged incompetence in his department.

This is not the first time Bounds has combined a disciplinary measure with an investigation. But it is an *Alice in Wonderland* manoeuvre in which conviction precedes the trial, and it has been condemned by judges of all ranks. In the end Rickards got an estimated golden handshake of £35,000, and the flawed and costly proceedings against him lapsed. He was even thanked by council leaders for his work and was told he would be sorely missed!

Helping Bounds in this action was head of legal services Paul Taylor, who this month was pronounced unfit for duty by the city's medical officer. He has been sent home from his stressful £40,000 a year job which mainly involves dealing with compensation claims from pavement trippers.

If and when he returns — to "less demanding duties" — he may himself be "Rickarded". A secret memo threatens him with the sack if he doesn't perform well after three months, thus making Taylor the latest fall guy in what appears to be a long line.

NEW YORKER WALKER

WESTMINSTER councillors have opened a book on how long the lady mayoress, arch-Republican New Yorker Carole Franco, will last.

She is *not* the traditional wife of the lord mayor or a grand dame of the borough: she was imported by lord mayor Robert Davis because it was felt voters might have a problem with his first choice — his close male chum and fellow councillor Simon Milton.

Thus he invited his former university pal Franco to London for a year — with automatic entrée to rarefied circles and the chance to meet Nelson Mandela at the Buckingham Palace state banquet.

Westminster residents are furious he could not find a suitable mayoress in the borough. But what really rankles is that despite the district auditor's condemnation of Westminster for letting the homeless live in squalor while council houses were sold to potential Tory voters, more than £13,000 is being spent to refurbish a two-bedroomed Mayfair flat for Franco to live in — free — during her year in London. Apparently she couldn't stay in the lord mayor's own spare bedroom at home because it might camp (*"cramp", shurely?*) his style.

PS: The reason many Westminster Tories didn't make more of a fuss was that with the name Franco she sounded like "one of us".

IN BRIEF

MANCHESTER: Councillors and city centre traders worry that by the time the IRA bomb damaged Arndale Centre is repaired in two years shoppers will have switched to the massive Dumplington Centre soon to open five miles west in Trafford. The owner of the Arndale, P&O, seems less concerned — but then P&O also owns the building company Bovis, which happens to be building the rival centre. The council can't make too many hostile noises over Dumplington because it is owned by the Manchester Ship Canal Company — which is bankrolling the council to run the 2002 Commonwealth games!

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

THE London borough of Southwark recalled and junked more than 7,000 copies of a glossy in-house brochure called The Shape of the Future when an employee noticed that the front cover included a photograph of a convicted paedophile grinning and holding a young girl. Council taxpayers will foot the bill for the blunder.

CALDERDALE: Tony Blair's call for pay restraint came too late for "new" Labour members of the council, whose priority on taking control in May seemed to be to up their allowances by 19 percent and award senior officers a 10 per cent rise. They gave the council's blue collar workers 2.9 percent.

HULL: The feud is still raging between West Hull MP Stuart Randall and the city's former mayor, Coun John Black, who crossed swords over a housing scheme Black was running but which Randall disapproved of for "not being in line with party policy". Black wrote Randall a letter questioning his competence as an MP, which the outraged MP has now cited in a libel writ. A bad week peaked for Black when a Hull resident served a writ on him accusing him of slander...

POLITICAL DUSTBIN?

WHEN the flagship Tory borough of Wandsworth was awarded the Tidy Britain Group Award it was a shock to locals, a staggering 10 percent of whom (26,000) had complained in the last year about rubbish collection.

Wandsworth's rubbish is collected by Serviceteam, which took over the contract from AAH. AAH had won on a bid £740,000 lower than its nearest competitor, and not surprisingly Serviceteam has struggled to make Wandsworth a profitable operation.

It enforced a six-day week and sacked eight dustmen to reduce costs, but this was quickly foiled by the workers' union, the GMB. With a massive number of complaints and union problems, Serviceteam cannot seem a great proposition to Lambeth, whose council is now looking at a Serviceteam bid for its own refuse services.

PS: Lambeth, whose bins are currently collected in-house, received complaints about rubbish collection last year from just 3.6 per cent of its population.

THE KILLICK FIELDS

MORE trouble for the so-called "business units" Bent's ousted Tories installed instead of old-fashioned council departments.

First it was Ad Shop which lost nearly half a million pounds (*Eyes passim*). Now details are emerging about Brent Homebuyers, the council's home-ownership wing, which has been in disarray since March when its authoritarian director Julia Killick was suspended by the council amid allegations of financial irregularities and accusations of racism from black and Asian staff.

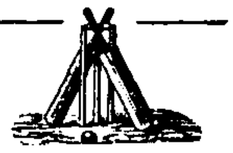
Killick apparently by-passed council guidelines and spent £80,000 on a firm of unregistered consultants, Priestly Associates, whom she had used at her previous council, Hounslow. No one knows how well they performed since their work was not monitored. Bent Homebuyers staff of course are tightly controlled through a computerised time management system.

Killick was recently reinstated but has now "resigned". While suspended she was investigated by business managing director Brian Queen, who knows all about awarding contracts to old friends. In October 1994 Bent gave a housing management contract to CSL — whom Queen had worked for until 1992.

CHEEK OF THE WEEK

IN 1991 Sheffield lost £25 million hosting the world student games no one wanted, building £150 million worth of hi-tech sports stadia no one wanted (and which now cost £30 million a year to run) — while closing libraries, OAP homes, arts centres and public toilets to pay for the event. So what are the laughing stock councillors doing now? Hosting a party to mark the games' fifth anniversary! While local taxpayers will still be paying for the games fiasco well into the next millennium, revellers are asked to bring their own drink and food to keep the costs down.

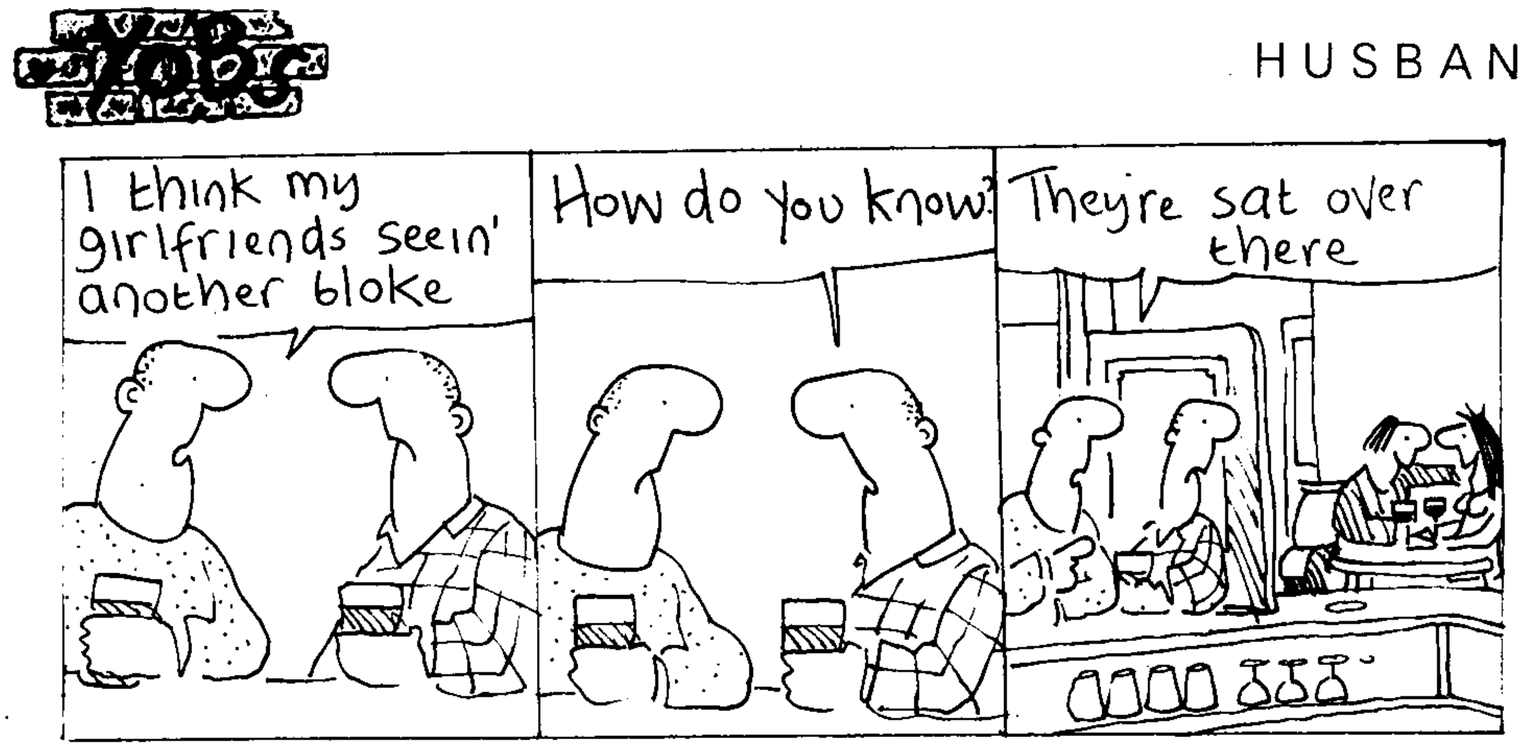
CRICKET NEWS



THE climax of the exciting cricket match between Channel Four and parliament at the Westminster School ground on 11 July came when John "Vulcan" Redwood, contender for the Tory party leadership, strode confidently to the wicket.

The hush of expectation round the ground was quickly silenced when, after a few rather ungainly swipes, Redwood managed to sit on his wicket dislodging a bail.

He was immediately and quite properly given out by the square leg umpire. He then strode down the wicket demanding confirmation from the umpire at the bowler's end, who promptly gave him out as well. Redwood retired as the fielders (and even his colleagues waiting to bat) reflected on the only unpleasant incident in an otherwise jovial day's cricket.



Letters

Attaché's case

Sir,

I write, while checking the calendar, about "Lockerbie Latest" (EYE *902). The latest? I suppose it depends on your definition... the story was first published 12 November 1994, in a Reuters World Service story. Curiously, your "Latest" omits the part where Pik Botha's spokesman said, "Had he known of the bomb, no force on earth would have stopped him from seeing to it that flight 103, with its deadly cargo, would not have left the airport". This story, together with other documentary evidence refuting various canards about the case, was sent to* PRIVATE EYE *in a mailing from my office in May, 1995.*

Even more curious is the lack of any mention of the actual "Latest" in the case: the apologies (and damage payments) made by publishers Penguin Books Ltd and Bloomsbury Publishing Plc to Micheal [stet] Hurley over allegations against him in TRAIL OF THE OCTOPUS, *a book which has served as the basis for the current spate of conspiracy theories about the bombing of PA103. Penguin went on to say that the book was so inaccurate it should never have been published.*

Sincerely yours,
JOHN BURGESS,
Press Attaché, Embassy of the United States of America.

Lookalike

Editor

Wimbledon Seed

Sir,

Imagine my surprise, on attending what I expected to be the match of Lindsay Davenport, the eigth-seeded lady at Wimbledon, when I saw none other than your own esteemed editor on court in a skirt. You obviously don't pay him enough...

Faithfully,
TIM HOWE,
London, SE10

Sorry affair

Sir,

"Sorry Is The Hardest Word". I refer to your Rotten Boroughs' piece, EYE, *12 July.*

Yes, I did apologise on behalf of the council. The former occupants sought an apology, the council recognised, understandably, that one was needed, and so it was sent.

More significantly, the comments about Messrs England and Hayler are grossly inaccurate. Mr England and Mr Hayler were moved from their positions in the housing department in 1994 (hardly a new job in 1996), and have not, as you suggest, been offered new jobs. They have had absolutely **no** *involvement in housing policy since January 1994.*

Yours faithfully,
W. ROOTS,
Chief Executive, City of Westminster.

Evaluating the crown jewels

Sir,

The Marquesa's touching concern for little Jane Ward's dilemma does her credit, but the problem can be easily solved.

Doubtless the Marquesa was on the grouse moors in September '94 when a German tabloid published a photograph of Jane's friend Brian "in the altogether, the altogether". But those of us unfortunates who happened to be abroad at that time were compensated with a glimpse of our future king's full-frontal potential.

Perhaps little Jane's ghost writer could do a spot of research into some back numbers of foreign newspapers, as our own dear tabloids, tasteful to the last, refused to publish it.

As I recall, Brian's equipment, while being a little short of a whole Cumberland sausage, certainly appeared to contain a lot more meat than a chipolata.

Perhaps this little piece of information will go some way to saving an impoverished gentlewoman from life in a cardboard box, selling the BIG ISSUE.

Yours,
A.D. WYLIE,
Glenrothes, Fife.

Nothing ventured

Sir,

Adam Farndell is sadly mistaken (Record Profits, Letters, EYE *902). Virgin Retail is still 25 percent owned by Virgin and includes Our Price. When our joint venture was agreed with W.H. Smith the Monopolies and Merger Commission agreed that our combined sales were less than the watershed figure at the time of around 25-28 percent to trigger a divestment; they also felt there was sufficient competition in the entertainment retail business. Virgin Retail has competitors such as HMV, Woolworths, Tower Records and virtually every supermarket and garage in the country, let alone independent record shops.*

The BA-American deal will give the already monopolistic carriers over 60 percent of US-UK market. Now surely that can't be right because it sounds to me like the Laker cartel all over again!

Yours sincerely,
WILL WHITEHORN,
Virgin Management Ltd.

Rough trade

Sir,

While holidaying in France recently I happened to consult CASSELL'S COMPACT ENGLISH/FRENCH DICTIONARY *for the French word for "rough". Included in the entry was the following: "To rough it"; ..."manger de la vache enragée", literally "to eat (of the) mad cow".*

An apt description of life in Tory Britain, n'est-ce pas?

Yours sincerely,
PETER ATKINSON,
Bury, Lancs.

Brave man

Sir,

In the "The Heartwarming Column" of the 12 July edition of PRIVATE EYE, *you say: "When the injuns asked why his company carried out opencast mining, Lord Hanson riposted wittily: 'Because I say so'."*

Lord Hanson did make the comment, "Because I say so"; but in response to a question regarding an amendment to the agenda for the AGM. A question was indeed raised as to whether Hanson carried out opencast mining, but in the UK, not the USA. This question was not raised by a Native American and Hanson has no coal interests in the UK.

This wilful and repetitive mis-reporting of the facts is unacceptable. I wrote to you only in February to comment on your totally inaccurate portrayal of Lord Hanson as having been offensive to the Native American community. In publishing the substance of this letter you might have been expected to avoid a repeat blunder so shortly afterwards.

I must ask for your written confirmation that you will cease these totally inaccurate and libellous reports.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM DRANSFIELD,
Legal Director, Hanson.

Direct opposites

Sir,

I noted with interest the letter re the picture heading up Signal Failures. Regretfully the correspondent is not quite correct — the locomotive is in fact a Fairlie design which has articulated power units under a solid frame.

This might strike you as an outburst of pure anorakism. However, the locomotive had one feature often seen in British politics today. It was possible for both units to operate in different directions. This was accompanied by vast amounts of smoke, hot air and noise but achieved no forward or backwards motion, remaining exactly where it started!

Now that's a British invention for you.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW JONES
Luton, Beds.

Lookalike

For richer...

For poorer...

Sir,

I can't help noticing the remarkable similarity between the good-bye kisses of Charles and Fergie — are their divorce settlements by any chance related? I think the taxpayer should be told.

Yours, etc,
STEPHEN KING,
London N1.

Words fail him

Sir,

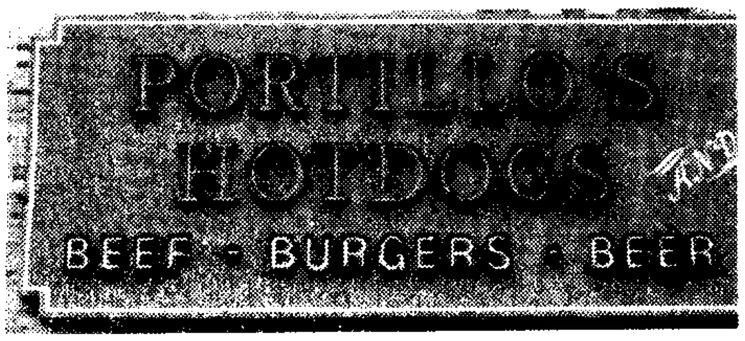
He who writes your Literary Review has a soul so close to my own that I sometimes think he has access to it. I must however take one small exception to his beautifully-incisive review of David Wallace's INFINITE JEST. *His albeit-passing comparison of Wallace to Cormac McCarthy jarred me to the bone. Aloes and honey. Chalk and cheese. Crap and caviare. Wallace, meantime, is just a scribbler, but McCarthy is a Writer with a capital "W". And the fact that his writing embodies occasional sentences (NOT pages) of dialogue in "un-translatable Spanish" serves only to enhance his absolute veracity. Any intelligent reader might readily infer, from the context, the gist of any such exchange.*

And it takes a real Writer, a chronicler, so to convey his Life's work. Your reviewer quite properly cites Steinbeck, but can he not come to accept that McCarthy — and latterly Larry McMurtry, with his beautiful LONESOME DOVE, *and Annie L. Proulx with her* POSTCARDS — *are very worthy successors? Having been enthralled by Steinbeck about 50 years ago, I have to judge McCarthy et al as being at least as good and possibly even better.*

I could extrapolate ad infinitum, but having been a working writer these past nearly-50 years, it irks me to write except to earn money. However, one last word: I and many of my friends and acquaintances subscribe to PRIVATE EYE *PRIMARILY for its Literary Review. It shoots a bright arrow of sanity which hisses through the slough of despair to which we are endlessly submitted.*

Truly,
ANGUS ROSS,
Harrogate, North Yorks.

I-SPY *Chicago*



Submitted by Mike Coulter. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Di-mobilised

Sir,

I would like to add my name to those of the soldiers reportedly saddened by the loss of their Colonel-in-Chief, Diana, Princess of Wales.

As an old soldier — I am at present awaiting news of my National Service Commemorative medal, March, 1949-October 1950 — I well remember the day our regimental sergeant major retired. Small beer by comparison, perhaps, but the very real sense of deprivation stays with me to this day.

Yours,
HARRY LOVELOCK,
Hove, East Sussex.

Fine tuning

Sir,

Have you noticed the resemblance between the beginning of the South African national anthem and the beginning of "Underneath the spreading chestnut tree"? Seeing that the South African national anthem so closely resembles a tune that has already been written for someone else, could it be possible that Andrew Lloyd Webber might have written it?

Yours faithfully,
VINCE,
Southall.

EDS case

Sir,

I have followed the EYE*'s long-running saga about US computer company EDS with great interest. I now note (HP Sauce,* EYE *902) that the Child Support Agency (which, in this context, effectively means EDS) is holding nearly four million detailed personal data records. This figure is especially alarming in the context of the number of open CSA cases — 435,000. By contrast, there are 650,000 CSA cases which are officially closed; in these, data protection law (not to mention commonsense) would seem to require that the personal data records be removed from the system. The same could probably be argued for the further 735,000 cases which the CSA classes as "inactive".*

However, **no** *data has been deleted, removed or archived away from the CSA's EDS computer system during the three years it has been operating. But that, of course, is the game plan: as you pointed out in a recent issue, EDS is hell-bent on amassing a comprehensive data record on every man, woman and child in Great Britain.*

Why does the data protection registrar not step in to clip the CSA's wings? Because government departments are immune from prosecution under the data protection laws. No wonder EDS is so keen to win government contracts! Big Brother or what?

LEON C KIDD,
Warwick.

A race apart

Sir,

Having taken an interest in the recent visit of Nelson Mandela to the UK I have seen a large number of photographs depicting the ethnic president smiling whilst standing alongside white anglo saxons. I would like to congratulate him on such a show of defiance against the racists that still inhabit our world and wonder if you had any photographs that showed that the race barrier could be breached. If so, maybe now is the time to publish them and show support for Nelson.

Yours etc,
CHRIS GIBBONS,
Somewhere in South Africa.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"With the retirement of Dickie Bird something sad will have gone out of English cricket."
JOHN MAJOR, BBC2
(R.F. Heys)

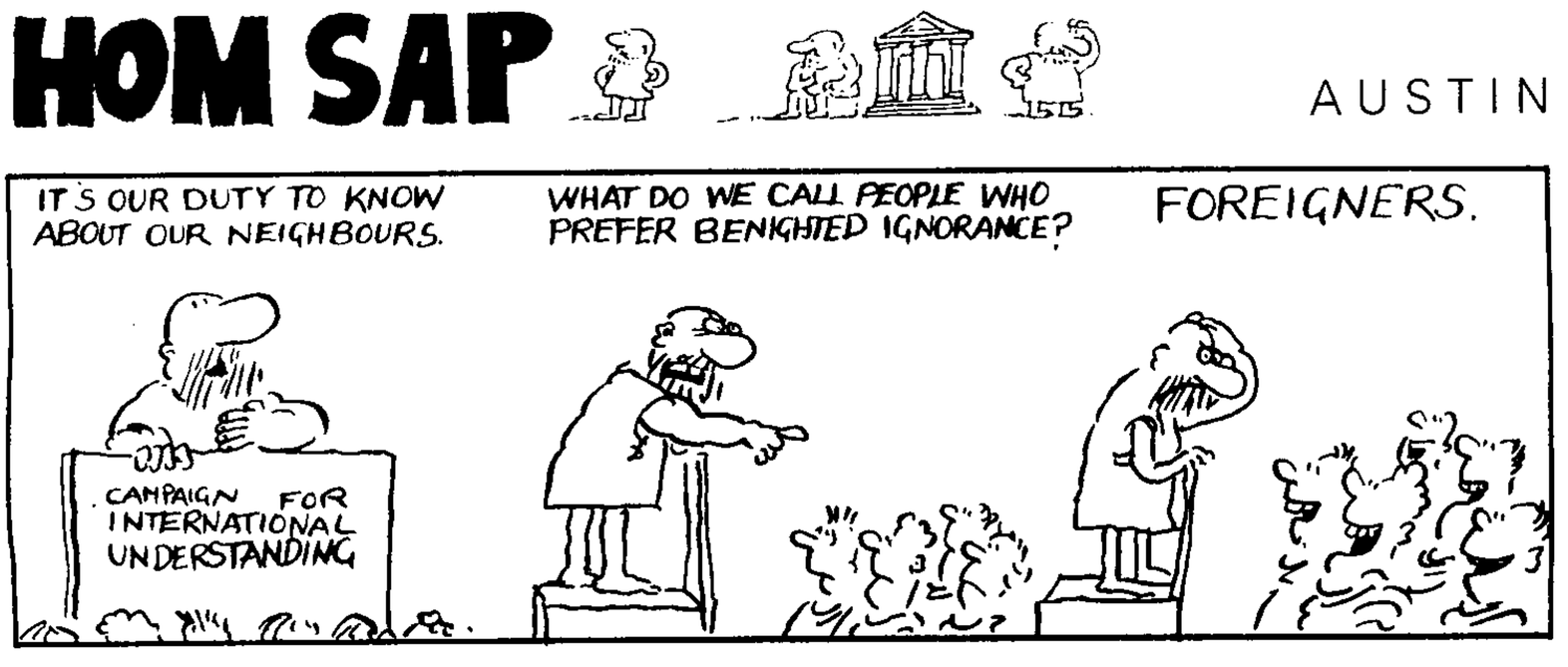
"After she [Seles] came back, she was hitting the ball like a pistol."
VIRGINIA WADE, BBC1
(Tim Harrison)

"I've had this sneaking feeling throughout the game that it's there to be won..."
RON ATKINSON, ITV
(Thom Gorst)

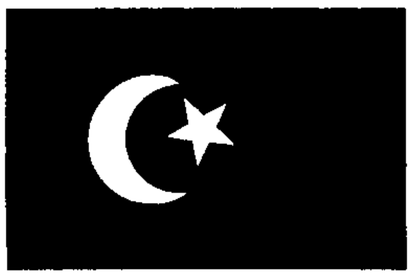
John Dunn: *So where have you been today?*
Contestant: *Hull Docks.*
John Dunn: *Where's that?*
Contestant: *Hull.*
BBC RADIO 2
(L. Preece)

"That's a wise substitution by Terry Venables: three fresh men, three fresh legs."
JIMMY HILL, BBC1
(Andrew Puddifoot)

HOM SAP


AUSTIN
IT'S OUR DUTY TO KNOW ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURS.
WHAT DO WE CALL PEOPLE WHO PREFER BENIGHTED IGNORANCE?
FOREIGNERS.
CAMPAIGN FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Letter from Istanbul



from Our Own Correspondent

HOWEVER tarnished the image of Turkish football after defeats in Euro 96, it doesn't bear comparison to the hammering our police suffered during the recent United Nations conference on human settlements, Habitat II.

After Istanbul police chief Kemal Yazicioglu said he would allow no actions "which aim to give a bad impression to the world by putting Turkey and the Turkish police into a difficult position", hundreds of his officers tried to ensure the conference passed off without incident of any kind — especially after a cash-strapped government spent an estimated $35 million preparing for the last big UN jamboree of the century.

Police action began with the shutting down of Alternative Habitat II, a kind of fringe housing festival, before it had even started. Police barred entry to the venue and arrested several participants. They had also been busy near the conference area rounding up large numbers of street kids, transvestites and gays who normally live in the downtown area where the UN effort was being held.

These police activities still did not present the 10,000 UN delegates and journalists with a favourable enough impression. So a small demonstration on the city's Galata Bridge which threatened to have families taking part — albeit families of prisoners on hunger strike in Diyarbakir prison — was swiftly broken up.

Minister of the interior Ulku Guney was still troubled at the image the world might be getting. So three days later police acted "objectively and with determination", as he described it, in breaking up a demonstration of the mothers of those missing in police custody (currently some 400 cases) in the Beyoglu district near the conference centre.

Having improved Turkey's image considerably by beating to death journalist Metin Goktepe in January, police kept the "family" nature of their hospitality going by arresting and nearly bludgeoning to death his sister, along with several lawyers from the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD), a number of journalists and Nita Kapoor, of the Norwegian People's Aid, one of the official UN non-governmental organisations.

The police also started rounding up people from the neighbouring headquarters buildings of the IHD, the left-wing Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP), the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), and the Confederation of Public Service Workers Unions (KESK). This included KESK chairman Siyami Erdem; ODP vice-president Erdal Kara; and HADEP executive committee members Bahattin Gulen and Latif Kaya.

Thirty people turned out at Aksaray police HQ the next day to inquire into the hospitality being received by those arrested at the demo, and they too were invited in for a longer stay.

Protests from the UN NGO representatives came almost daily during the conference's second week, including a lunch time vigil at Istanbul Technical University. This was joined at one stage by television celebrity Mert Ali, who dressed up as a policeman and larked about hitting people with a plastic truncheon while shouting "No Press!" The comedian was arrested and taken to the anti-terrorism police for a lengthy grilling.

The next Saturday's follow up demo by the mothers of the disappeared was met by riot police backed up by armoured cars and a nearby football stadium full of soldiers. Three hundred more people were arrested, and MPs Algan Hacaloglu and Ercan Karakas were given a healthy thumping.

While minister of justice Mehmet Agar, who supported the police actions, may shrug off the US congressional vote that labelled him Turkey's number one torturer (his career took off after the last coup), it was a pity the UN forum listed pages of human rights violations during the conference. It was also a shame that Joanna Weschler, of the Helsinki Human Rights Watch, had to declare it "unacceptable that at a time when Turkey is hosting a major international conference like Habitat II, the government interferes with the free expression of its own citizens".

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"My patriotic cigarettes are a boon to our nation," inventor Pu Danming told a medical convention in Beijing. "I tell you this, it brings a tear to my eye to know that, every month, thousands of loyal Chinese are buying them and learning to smoke their way to health."

Danming then explained the principle behind his healthy cigarettes: "It is simple yet brilliant. The plastic tube contains a mixture of Chinese herbs, a battery, a microchip, some wires and a bulb, but no tobacco whatsoever. The cigarette is not lit, but rather, when the smoker takes a puff, a light flashes on the end to simulate burning ash, and a patriotic song plays to give the smoker the feeling of elation and gaiety that he used to get from nicotine. With my cigarette, there is no phlegm, no sputum, no bad breath, and no cancer. And best of all, the herbs also guard the smoker against a variety of illnesses, including hay fever, croup, piles and genital warts." *(Victoria Times-Colonist, 5/96. Spotter — Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)*

— o —

"As the new chairman of the Lukembe Circumcisers Society of Kenya, my first duty is to raise the professional and ethical standards of our organization. Therefore, from today onwards, all members are banned from circumcising dead people, and against drinking alcohol before performing a circumcision. Further, no member should use the tools of his trade to threaten other people, to repair motor vehicles, or to castrate dogs.

"Payment for all circumcisions is to remain at a standard rate of Shs 3000, although a cow is also acceptable as a form of payment. By order, Isaac Misigo, Chairman, Lukembe Circumcisers Society, Kakamega Town, Kenya." *(The Standard (Kenya), 16/5/96. Spotter — Anon)*

— o —

"My question is this — therapist or the rapist?" senior Crown counsel Joseph To asked the jury in Hong Kong's District Court, while pointing at the defendant, Sham Kwok-keung. "Let me tell you, the only reason this man has not already been struck off the medical register is because he was a bogus doctor in the first place."

Mr To was summarising the evidence against Sham, 41, indicted on a charge of committing unlawful sex acts by false pretences, against a woman known only as Mrs A. "First, he telephoned Mrs A, claiming that he was a specialist who was administering cancer therapy to her husband. He told her that, as part of the cure, he had to play a tape of his wife's sex moans during the operation, but that her husband must on no account know about the recording, or the remedy would not work. Then, using a voice distorter, he phoned her again, this time pretending to be a woman patient of the specialist. In female disguise, Sham swore that the sex moan therapy had worked on her own husband. Mrs A, a profoundly gullible woman, believed everything she was told, and agreed to meet a sex therapist to discuss how to make the recording.

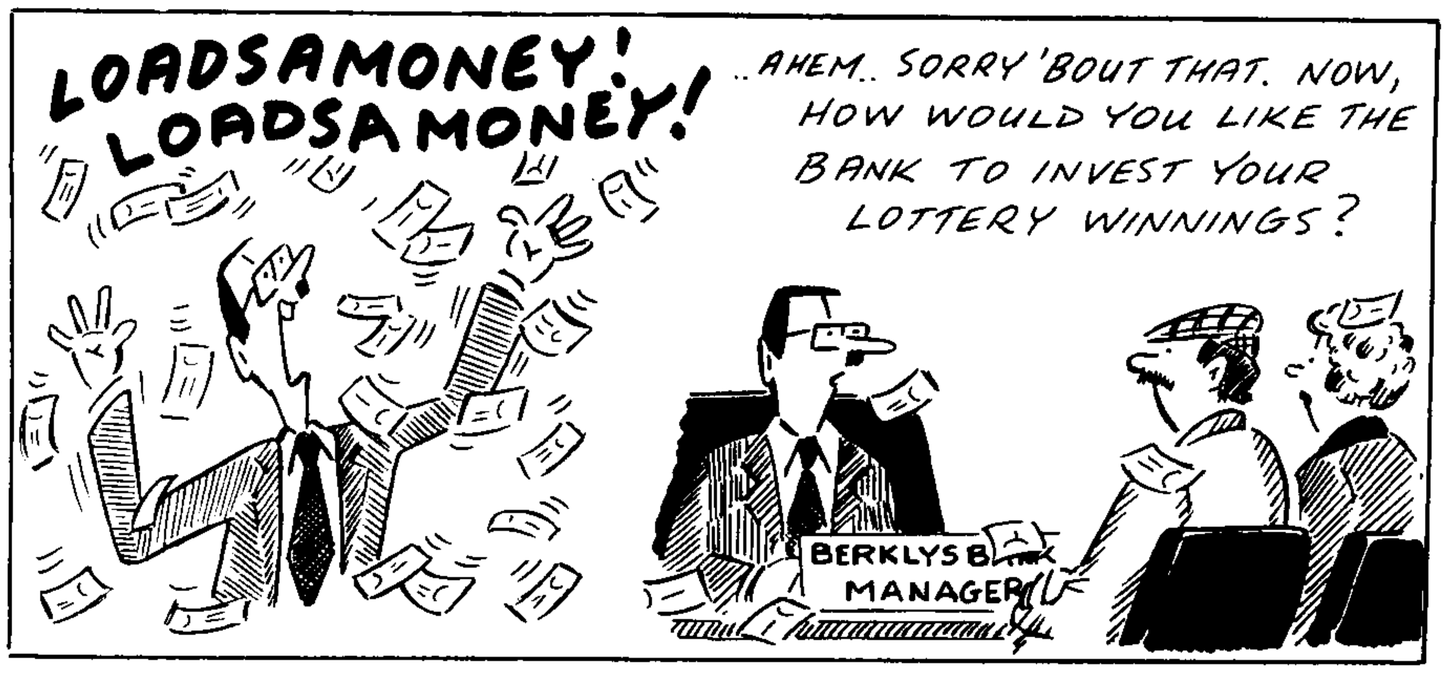
"On January 8th in a park, Mrs A met Sham, who was now pretending to be the sex therapist. Next day, they went to her flat with his recording equipment, and had sex all afternoon and evening, because he kept telling her that the equipment was faulty, and had not recorded her moans clearly enough. When he finally left, Sham also demanded £3,000, which she paid. When her husband came home a few days later, Mrs A told him what she had done to 'save' him, and discovered that he was perfectly healthy, and had in fact been in Guatemala on a business trip. At that point, it became a police matter." (South China Morning Post, 19/6/96. Spotter — Roger Eke)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

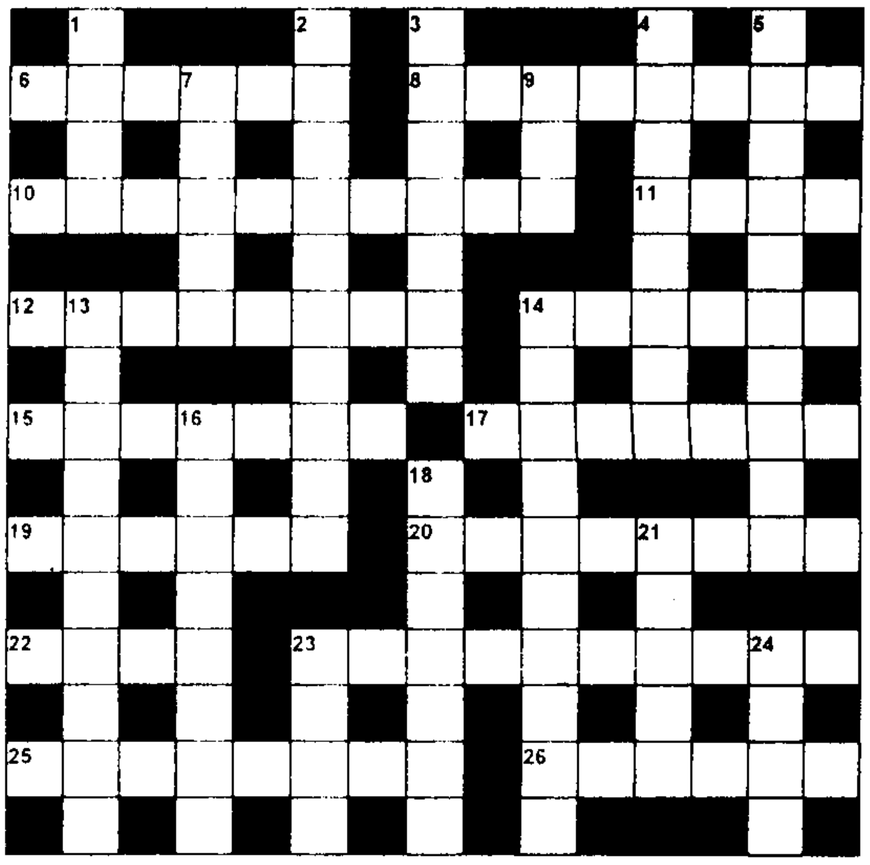
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


LOADSAMONEY! LOADSAMONEY!
..AHEM.. SORRY 'BOUT THAT. NOW, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THE BANK TO INVEST YOUR LOTTERY WINNINGS?
BERKLYS BANK MANAGER

EYE CROSSWORD 58

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

6 Shag somebody the old-fashioned way and suddenly understand? (6)
8 Our monarch a comedian, possibly a riot? Hardly! (8)
10/21 Many instances of carousing and intercourse from which Gerry's barred (5-5,5)
11 Stuff Southwark's head police! (4)
12 High speed number takes one second by male given oxygen — result of excess testosterone? (8)
14 Buzz off darling — good riddance (6)
15 Hugh Grant pic seen by millions — the sap's real popular (3,4)
17 PM has cracked! About to give up! (7)
19 Old forms of transport luvvies are at home on? (6)
20 One lot misrepresented and framed by tabloid images, but it's what MPs are all about (8)
22 Players involved in riot (4)
23 Kenneth Clarke has to waddle back after accident (10)
25 Peter Wright admittedly backed them commonly — well, I never! (6,2)
26 The standard in women's ignorance! (6)

DOWN

1 Churchman's bit of skirt (4)
2 Rotten band — lot pisses off about ten (3,7)
3 Major element in clever Tony's team (7)
4 Stink about politician, unconscious, next to university ex-president (8)
5 Jack gets elected with gusto — one small jerk inclined to foreigner-bashing (10)
7 Kill Brenda off for being un-queenlike? (5)
9 Ejaculation now expected from Gazza? (3)
13 Grown men covering up euro fiasco — like many a Conservative minister? (10)
14 We hear our posh Eye contributor's an O.B.N. candidate (4-6)
16 Patriotic figure shows way to get stuffed; England's first to get shoved in (2,6)
18 Ring main thieves when right out of drugs (7)
21 (see 10)
23 You may get it in the neck in Southern Ireland! (4)
24 Lady MP old lag screwed around with (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 02.08.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 57

Winner: NEIL DURY

ACROSS: 8 No-go area 9 The Net 10 NSPCC 11 Dimbleby 12/26 Duchess of York 14 Astra 16 Clinton 17 Moronic 20 Cut up 22 Hardliner 24 Karadzic 25 Mayor 27 Dublin 28 Wet dream.

DOWN: 1 John Bull 2 Pomp 3 Crack shot 4 Hand job 5 Stamp 6 Berlusconi 7 (see 13) 13/7 Honourable Member 15 Goldsmith 18 Ice cream 19 Mad cow 21 Uranus 23 Ozone 26 (see 12).

ATLANTA UPDATE

ULSTER BRINGS HOME ORANGE

The Northern Ireland 2000 Bowler Hat Drum and Pipe Relay Team seen here passing the winning post in the 3 Kilometre Provocative Free-Style Triumphalist March

YES, ONCE again Ulster has carried off the "Orange" at this year's Olympics.

Said trainer Rev Ian Paisley: "The lads really put one over on the Opposition. They've been training over 300 years for this and they've shown the world what bigotry can achieve."

Last night, when they heard the news, the people of Northern Ireland took to the streets. Buses burned all night, old women and children hid under the tables and mini-cab drivers shot each other in the head.

Sir Patrick Mayhew is 87.

You are cordially invited...

Bookings now being taken

A chance to meet the Prime Minister in the candlelit intimacy of Number Ten.

Yes, for as little as £10,000 (which you can conceal in your company accounts under "Sundries") you can rub shoulders with one of the world's most powerful statesmen.

Take this unique opportunity to pass on your business worries while simultaneously helping to benefit the Tory Party — **without a single shareholder being any the wiser!**

What it will cost

- *£10,000 "The Executive" Downing Street Experience with 3-course menu specially chosen by famous gourmet, M. Norrington Patel, proprietor of the world famous Manoir de Happy Eater, Newport Pagnell.*
- *£100,000 The Sir Winston Churchill De Luxe "Dinner of a Lifetime" with 5 course menu and choice of fine wines specially selected by internationally renowned Praed Street vintner J. Onanuga.*

Hurry! Hurry!

Cheques payable to: Mawhinney Executive Leisure Facilities, PO Box 494, WC1.

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam: John Boon, Co-Founder of Mills & Boon

So. Farewell
Then John
Boon.

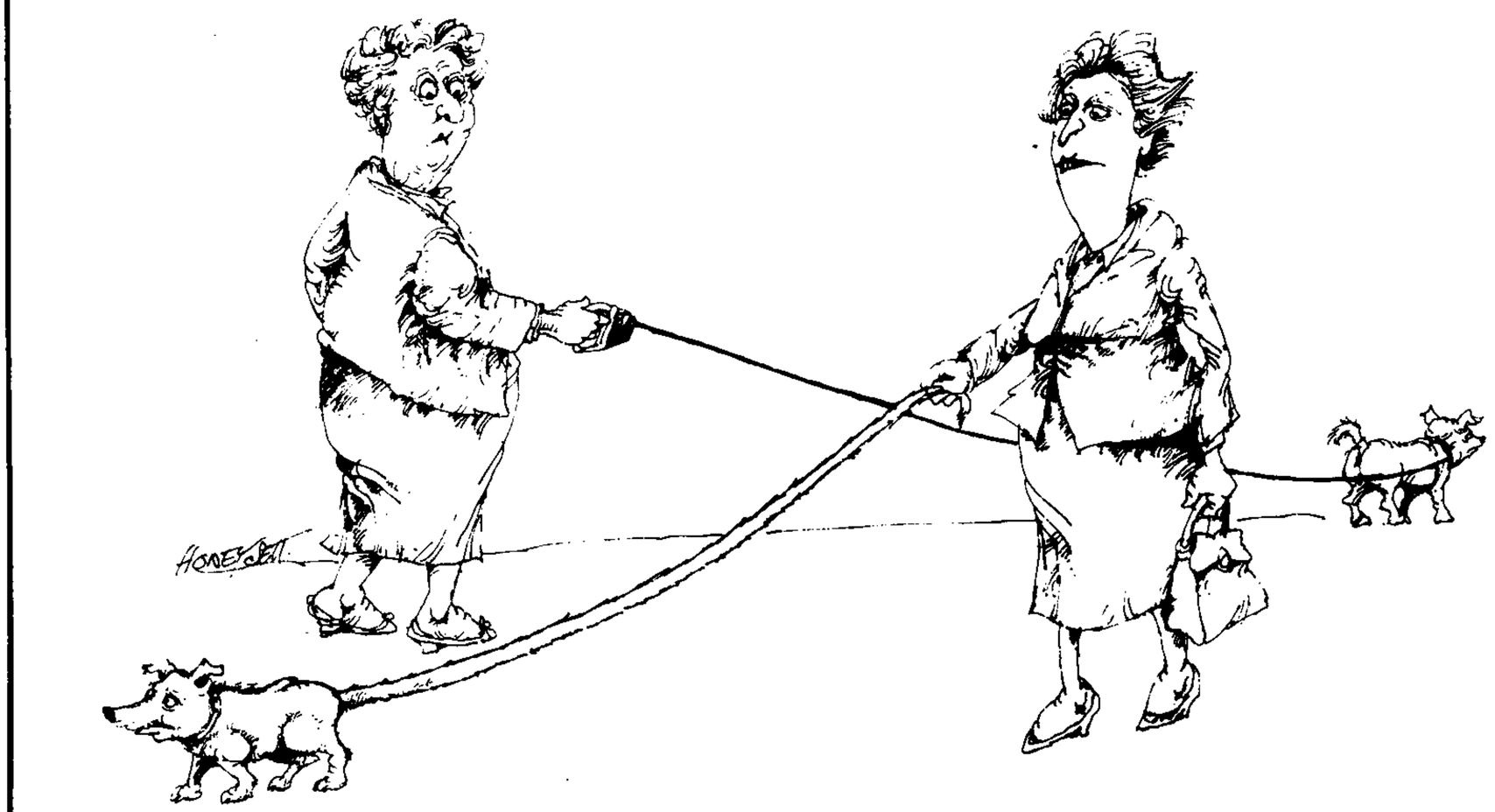
Of Mills &
Boon fame.

Mills.

It does not
Have the same
Ring

Without you.

E.J. Thribb (17½)
Winner of the Independent Poetry Prize



The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

Today I launched my campaign to win the next election by granting an exclusive interview to a lady from the Daily Telegraph who has very long legs and an even longer name, ie Salmonella Wyfront. Unfortunately, most of the time had to be taken up with arranging the photograph which was to show her sitting on the sofa talking to me. Some of her questions were not inconsiderably personal in tone, eg had I read Terry's book? I had to explain once again that, owing to the pressures of running the country, I had not had time to read it, but that it did contain a very large number of errors, eg on p.183 where it says that I came third from bottom in a math's exam at Rusbridger Grammar School, the maths teacher was wrongly named as Mr Wingate, when as everybody who went to the school knows it was the famous Mr Beamish (whom we all called "The Beamer"). Unfortunately, the Daily Telegraph reporter did not have the space in her full page article to correct these errors.

Tuesday

Mr Dr Mawhinney has come up with yet another brilliant slogan to win us the next election — "Have We Got New Labour For You — Yes It Doesn't Work". He tells me it will be used on TV showing an old lady looking out of her window and seeing a huge monster looking like Mr Blair knocking down all the houses opposite. Then a voice says "It Could Be New — Labour. Vote Conservative". There is no doubt that Dr Mawhinney was an inspired choice to succeed that other man whom I met in the tea room and who used to do the crossword, but whose name I cannot now remember, although his mother was in my favourite film, Genevieve (not I'm Alright Jack, as Terry claims on p.261).

Wednesday

I am incandescent with rage. For once the Daily Telegraph has got it right. My ex-friend Mr Briton, the so-called Teasock of Ireland, has accused me of destroying the peace process by allowing some of Mr Paisley's friends to walk down the road in bowler hats blowing whistles and beating drums. Let it be abundantly clear, the decision to allow the march was wholly the fault of the policeman in charge, Mr Annesley. We merely told him to let the march take place, otherwise we would have violence on the streets. But from then on it was entirely an operational decision for Mr Annesley, and the violence on the streets which followed must be laid at his door alone. Oh yes. How dare Mr Briton say I am to blame for destroying my own peace process, which has been the greatest single achievement of my prime ministership, apart from the Cones Hotline, vouchers for nursery schools and my Maastricht opt-outs. However, I have decided to draw a line under Mr Briton's stupid remarks, and in due course I will invite him to take part in new talks about talks about talks.

Mrs. M. Thatcher
The Prime Minister and Mrs Major
DO NOT invite you to a reception on the occasion of Sir Edward Heath's 80th Birthday
R.S.V.P.

Thursday

Today we have taken a holiday from politics to celebrate the 80th birthday of one of our most revered and respected statesmen, Mr Sir Edward Heath. Some time ago my wife Norman and I decided to invite him to a special dinner at Number 10, and he replied by sending a list of all the guests he wanted to be present. They included quite a lot of foreigners whom he used to know when he was prime minister, like Mr Pompidou from France, and also what he called "some fellow great musicians", such as Mr Sir Lord Yehudi Menuhin and Mr Rostropologist from Russia. Norman and I were very considerably looking forward to this historic occasion, as I have long felt that Sir Edward and I have a great deal in common — eg, we have both been Conservative prime ministers and we both share a not inconsiderable dislike for that woman whom neither of us ever mention, ie Mrs Thatcher.

The party was a great success until Mr Heath began his speech which everyone agreed went on slightly too long, ie four hours. It was quite interesting to hear him list all his achievements during his long and distinguished career, such as his repeal of resale price maintenance in 1964, his Local Government Reform Act of 1972 and the introduction of decimal coinage.

Friday

I am not inconsiderably incandescent with pleasure. At last I think things are going our way for the next election. Today the whole of London was in chaos because of a tube strike, and there were no letters because the postmen are also on strike. This is tremendous news, because it really reminds everyone of what life will be like under a Labour Government.

Tonight I was invited to a very historic interview on News At Ten with the country's most probing interviewer Mr Trevor Barbados.

As usual, Mr Barbados's questions were very tricky to deal with. For example, when he said to me: "Prime Minister, may I congratulate you on the success of your peace process. You are the bravest man in history," I was momentarily at a loss for words. Oh yes. Then I had an inspiration and, quick as a flash, I replied: "Thank you."

That put him in his place and from then on he was more conciliatory.

Saturday

Today someone else who I had never heard of announced that he was resigning over my policy on the European currency.

How can this man who I have not heard of resign over a policy which does not exist (i.e. I have not made up my mind yet)?

He is obviously a bastard and I will put him in my book as soon as I have discovered what his name is.

TOP BRITONS AIM FOR GOLD IN ATLANTA

by Our Sports Staff **Lunchtime O'Lympics**

NEVER before has Great Britain fielded such a strong team of hopefuls for medal glory as the plucky boys and girls chosen to represent the hopes of the nation in Atlanta.

As the gruelling schedule unfolds in the weeks that lie ahead, we can be sure that challengers will be giving their all in their chosen fields.

Boots The Chemist

From disciplines as varied as pharmacology and microbiology, Britain's top manufacturers are sure to make the headlines. Said one drug designer: "I have been preparing for this event for four years. I did a chemistry degree at university and then was selected to join the British anabolic steroid team."

Three Times Daley

Team captain Dr Beecham Glaxo added: "This is the proudest moment of any athletic chemist's career. With our world-class range of undetectable stimulants and performance enhancing substances we will bring back gold, as many of our products fetch anything up to $150,000 a gram."

EARLY RESULTS

Men's Discus: Cortis Coteroidz *(Bul)* 17 miles 423.7 yds

Women's Marathon: Mee Tuk Pill *(China)* 3 mins 27 secs

Men's Highjump: Ivan Overdosz *(Rom)* "I'm over the moon"

Radio Four

The Today Programme

with Sue MacGhastly

Newsreader: And the main news this morning is that a jumbo jet has crashed into the Atlantic killing 300 people. Eyewitnesses said it was like "a fireball".

For the latest picture we go over now to our Washington correspondent Bridget Kendall:

Kendall: I've just seen on TV that a jumbo jet has crashed into the Atlantic killing 300 people. Eyewitnesses said it was "like a fireball". I have just spoken to an eyewitness.

Eyewitness: The plane just fell out of the sky. It was like a fireball.

MacGhastly: Did anyone see bodies falling from the sky or anything interesting like that?

Kendall: Well, I doubt it, since it was dark.

MacGhastly: Bridget, what we're all wondering of course is why this crash happened.

Kendall: Well, I spoke on that just now to the local police chief.

Police Chief: Since we know nothing about the crash yet, it is far too early to speculate on what caused it.

MacGhastly: So it could be any one of a range of causes. Terrorism obviously cannot be ruled out. Do we have any idea who might have done it?

Kendall: ... er...

MacGhastly: I'm afraid I'm going to have to stop you there Bridget because it's time for the news.

Newsreader: News is coming in of a plane crash over the Atlantic. On this programme earlier an eyewitness said that...

Toytown News

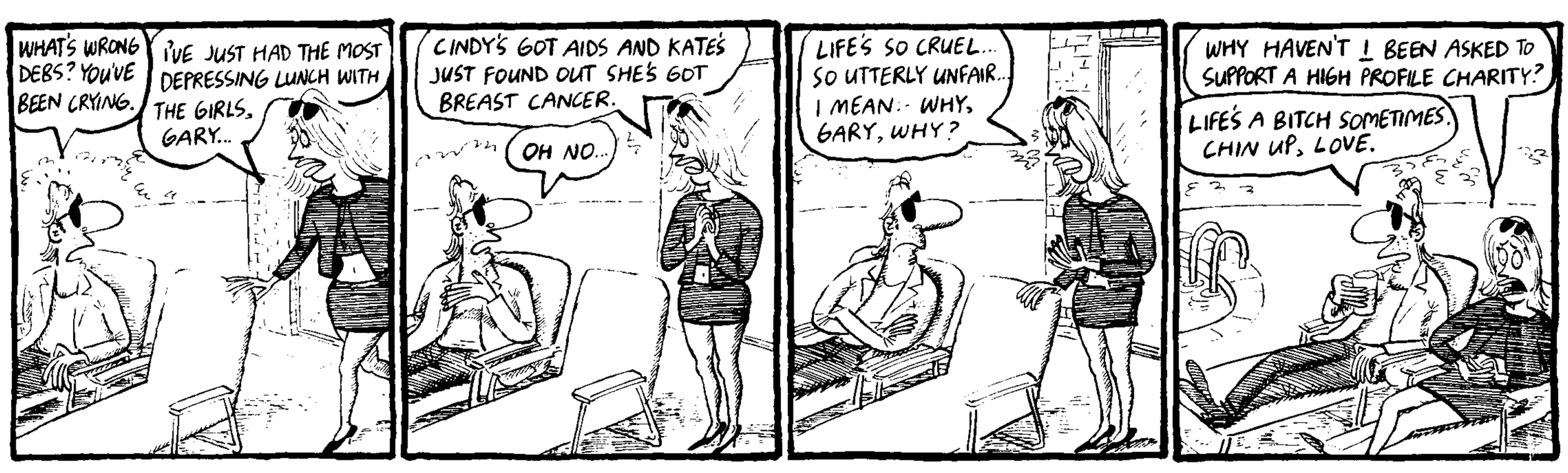
Duke to quit service

THE celebrated Duke of York, who has spent the last 20 years marching up and down hills with 10,000 men, is to resign his commission it was revealed today *(writes Royal Commentator Anthony Holden).*

An army spokesman said: "The Duke's military career isn't really going anywhere. He is bound to feel frustrated. It was alright when he was up, but when he's down, he's very down."

Celeb

LIGGER


WHAT'S WRONG DEBS? YOU'VE BEEN CRYING.
I'VE JUST HAD THE MOST DEPRESSING LUNCH WITH THE GIRLS, GARY...
CINDY'S GOT AIDS AND KATE'S JUST FOUND OUT SHE'S GOT BREAST CANCER.
OH NO...
LIFE'S SO CRUEL... SO UTTERLY UNFAIR... I MEAN:- WHY, GARY, WHY?
WHY HAVEN'T I BEEN ASKED TO SUPPORT A HIGH PROFILE CHARITY?
LIFE'S A BITCH SOMETIMES. CHIN UP, LOVE.

Available From Your Newsagent Now!

In 94 parts

The Gnome Book of the Shoelace

NEVER before has the exotic world of the shoelace been explained in such exciting detail.

From its earliest origins in the desert caves of the Matahari to the designer footwear of Georgio Tomati, the shoelace has long exercised a powerful grip on man's imagination.

Professor Hans Schumacher RCSFS, senior lecturer at the Institut von der Füss, Heineken, Germany, has spent a lifetime tracing the story of one of man's most mysterious artefacts.

As the weeks unfold, you will be drawn into the fascinating world of shoelaces.

DID YOU KNOW?

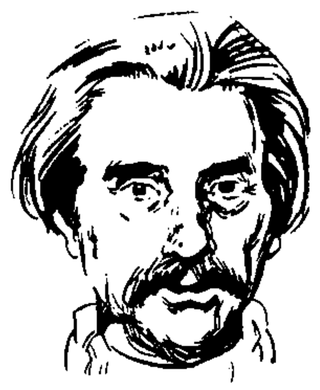
● **The first surviving shoelace was discovered in 1921 in the tomb of the Unknown Pharaoh by Danish architect Professor Adidas Reebok. It measured two inches in length and was fashioned from emu feathers.**

● The most expensive shoelace ever was made by Russian Court Jeweller Ivan Eiletov, apprentice to the famed Gustav Fabergé. Made of solid gold, it was difficult for the Russian Tsar, Jaspan the Terribly Stupid, to do up — with the result that it was never used and Eiletov was later executed. This famous shoelace is now on display at the Musée de Soulier, Limoges, France. *(Closed Mondays.)*

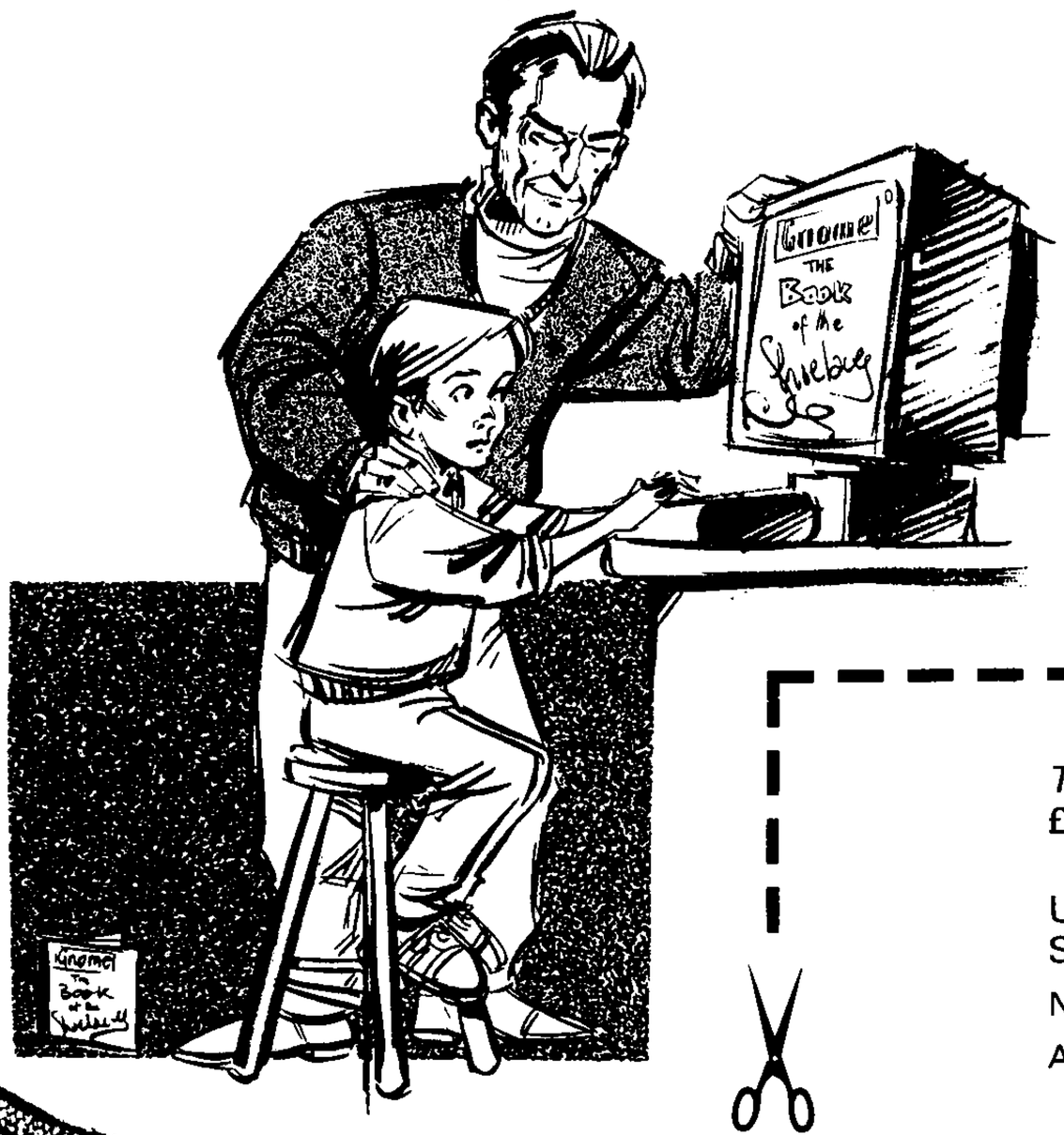
● **The world's longest shoelace was made in Vancouver in 1953. More than 300 miles in length, it took over 496 man-hours to thread it through the shoe of its owner, banker Lindberg Z. Zoffany III, President of the First National Bank of Saskatchewan.**

● In the marriage rites of the islanders of New Booker Island in the Pacific, the shoelace is handed down from father to son as a fertility symbol. The islanders believe that if the husband wears his shoes during marital intimacy his wife will give birth to many sons.

Shortly to be a 24-part series on BBC2. Introduced by Dr Roy Strong



*RICHLY illustrated throughout by famed Shoelace Artist **Eduardo Stoddolozzi**, President of the Royal Shoelace Artists Society. His exquisitely coloured drawings bring the shoelace to life as never before.*



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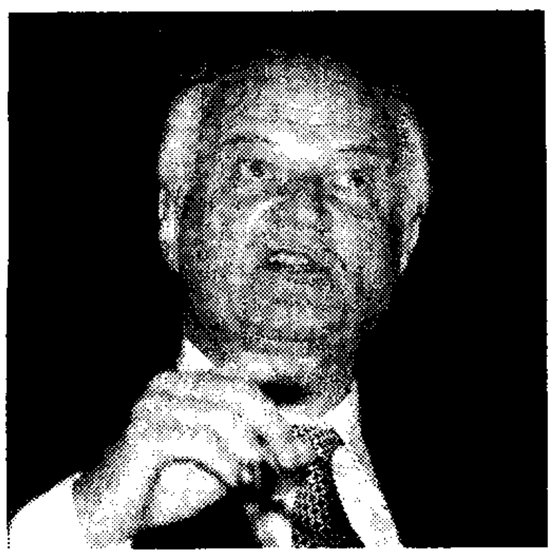


Bulletin No.94

From the Referendum Bunker

Achtung!

So, Mr Mellor, you thought you were safe.

But I have some, how do you say, news for you.

When the great day comes you will find an unexpected name alongside yours on the ballot slip.

Sir Golden Syrup-Paste.

What do you think about that, eh, Mr Mellor?

Is it really worth it, trying to carry on the struggle when I have entered the fray?

Yes. Me. The great Sir Jams Fishfinger.

Do you know how many millions I have, Mr Mellor, to pour into the fight against you and the ridiculous head of your organisation, the man you call "M"?

(Snaps fingers to summon swarthy Greek manservant in tennis shorts)

Taki, open the safe and let Mr Mellor see for himself.

(Huge door slides open to reveal cavern full of gold ingots)

Now, Mr Mellor, you see what you are up against? Would it not be better to admit defeat and just spend your time with those lovely women who so unaccountably admire you. Miss Antonia di Pizza Galore. Mrs Monica Undress. And they call your latest conquest – Lady Chatterley?

You are beginning to bore me, Mr Mellor. Guards, take him away.

(A squad of highly-trained young Old Etonian Referendum Party candidates marches in and throws the unhappy MP for Putney into the shark tank)

Issued by the Referendum Party of Great Britain

(Sir J. Blofinger Prop.)

"No — I meant shave the part we're going to operate on"

Your Hotline To New BBC Chairman Sir Pigling Bland

Anne Robinson *(for it is she)*: Sir Pigling, as my employer, may I say at the beginning what a brilliant, multi-faceted individual you are. Not only are you very rich, but you are a keen amateur cook. Can we have the first caller please?

Caller: Sir Pigling, don't you think that allowing four-letter words on Men Behaving Badly sets a bad example to the young?

Sir Pigling: I couldn't agree less. We are very proud of Men Behaving Badly, as many of us do. It is a superbly professional, wonderfully written, witty programme which one day I hope to have time to watch.

Caller: Do you think it's right for a programme like EastEnders always to be showing people dying of Aids?

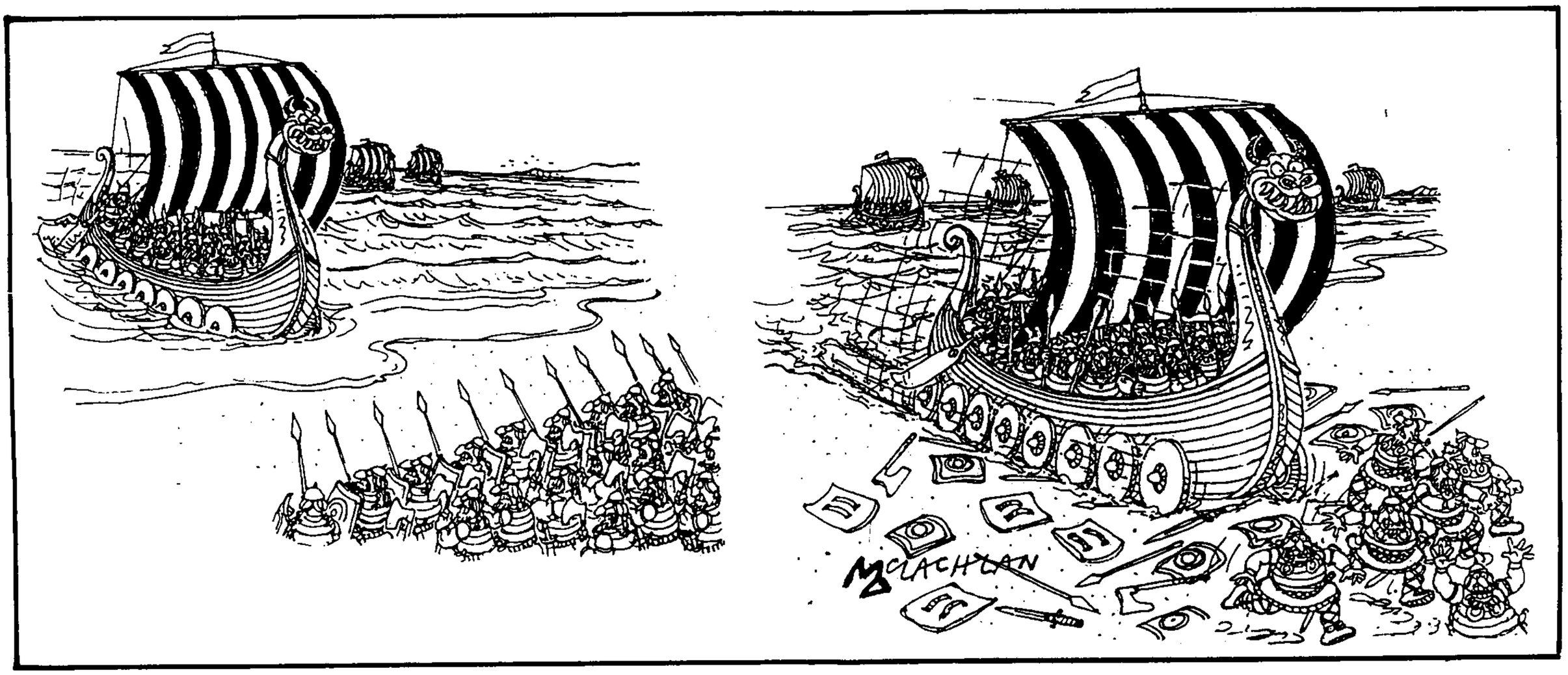
Sir Pigling: Absolutely. I couldn't agree less. We at the BBC are tremendously proud of Eastenders which is watched every day by over 40 million. It is a superbly professional, wonderfully written programme, and as for your point about Aids, EastEnders simply reflects the reality of most people's lives today.

Caller: Sir Pigling, I am not a sports lover myself, which is why I must ask if it is really necessary to show the Olympic Games all night, every night for weeks on end?

Sir Pigling: Absolutely. I couldn't agree less. A lot of viewers have written to us complaining that there is too much cricket on the radio, and that is why I think Test Match Special is something we are going to have to look at very closely. But I would like to say that it is a difficult balancing act and that by and large the BBC gets it just about right.

Caller: Is it right that the Chairman of the BBC should be allowed to go on the TV and tell a lot of lies?

Anne Robinson: Well, that's all we've got time for.



£3m 'Martin' gets critics' thumbs-down

By Our Man In Bed **Sheridan Snorely**

ONE of the best-known tales of mistaken identity opened in London last night and was instantly hailed as one of the greatest disasters of all time.

"Martin Amis" tells the story of a young man who returns to his native land and is mistaken for a novelist. Failing to see him for what he really is, a young woman, Isabelle Isasucca, falls in love with Martin, believing him to be a genius.

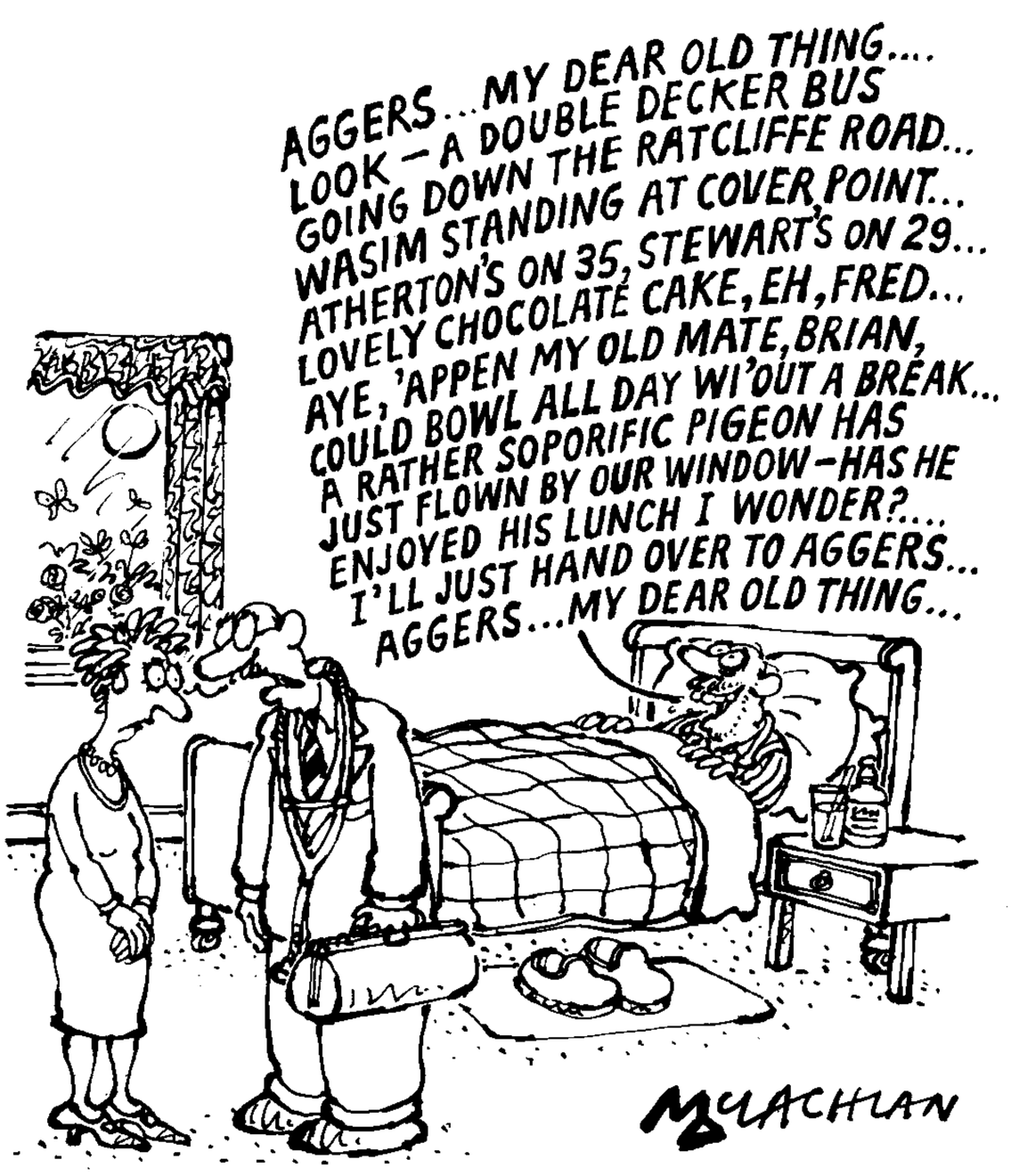
Guerrorf

In the less than convincing denouement, Martin is revealed as nothing more than a second-rate tennis correspondent and book reviewer. It ends in tragedy when his publishers realise they have invested millions of pounds on a worthless impostor.

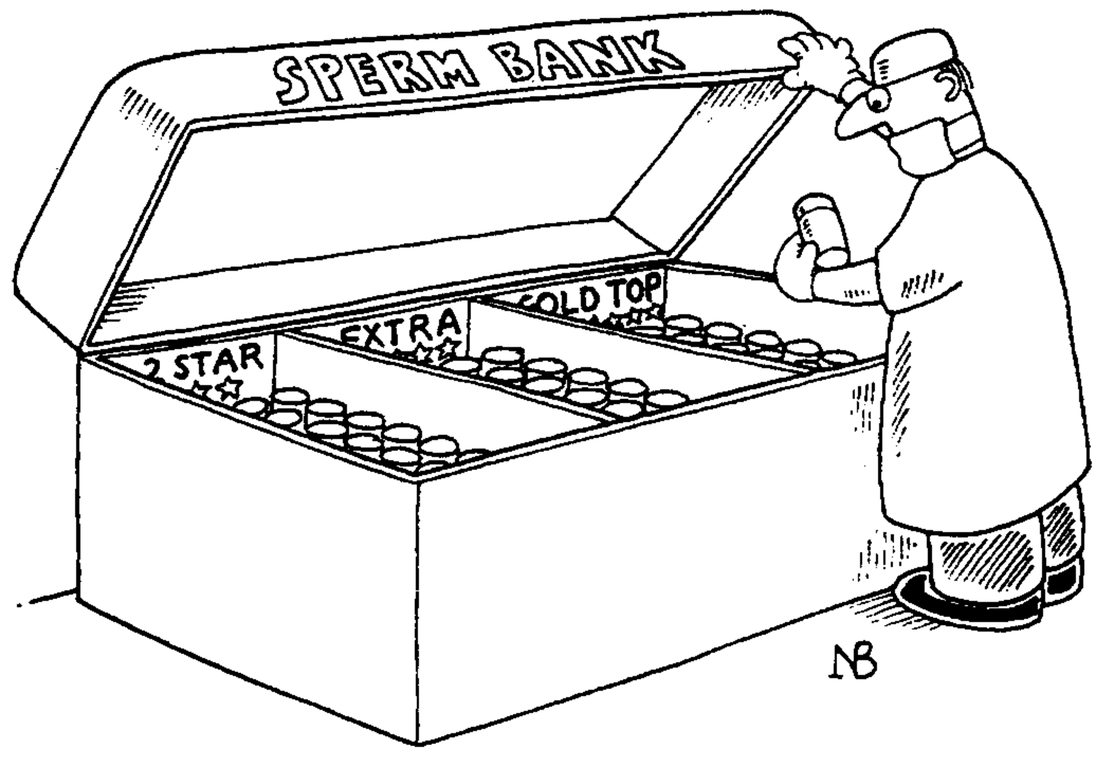
Star Rating: One to Amis

That New Rocky Horror Non-Gender-Oriented Hades-Free Creed In Full

The President *(for it is he):* We Believe In God The Parent And In Its Only Offspring Who Became A Human Being And Went About Doing Good And Fighting For The Underprivileged, e.g. Gay Men, Lesbians And The Disabled. And This Person Was Oppressed By The Colonialist Regime Typified By Pontius Pilate And Put To Death. The Person In Question Descended Into A State Of Nothingness For Three Days, After Which The Person Returned In A State Which Cannot Be Defined. We Don't Believe In Very Much Else. Apersons.


AGGERS... MY DEAR OLD THING....
LOOK — A DOUBLE DECKER BUS
GOING DOWN THE RATCLIFFE ROAD...
WASIM STANDING AT COVER POINT...
ATHERTON'S ON 35, STEWART'S ON 29...
LOVELY CHOCOLATE CAKE, EH, FRED...
AYE, 'APPEN MY OLD MATE, BRIAN,
COULD BOWL ALL DAY WI'OUT A BREAK...
A RATHER SOPORIFIC PIGEON HAS
JUST FLOWN BY OUR WINDOW — HAS HE
ENJOYED HIS LUNCH I WONDER?....
I'LL JUST HAND OVER TO AGGERS...
AGGERS... MY DEAR OLD THING...
McLACHLAN

"First the good news, Mrs Wimbrell — it's not CJD. But the bad news is that your husband has TMS..."



Notes & Queries

QUESTION: Who invented the Post-It stick-on-label? — *Mr H.A. T. Rickatson-Hatt, Rickmansworth, Kent.*

☐ MOST people believe that the label owes its name to the American stationery mogul Otis T. Postit of Milwaukee. In fact, though Postit pioneered many other stationery innovations (including the self-sealing envelope and the portable pencil sharpener), the Post-It originated in Switzerland in the 17th century and was first used by Swiss bankers to pass notes to one another. — *J.R.B. Eulenspiegel, Zurich.*

QUESTION: Can any reader suggest the best way of removing stains caused by parrot droppings on the shoulder? — *L.J. Silver, Plymouth Hoe, Devon.*

☐ MY grandfather spent many years in South America where he kept a number of parrots. He used the old Inca method which is to mix salt with ground sesame seeds and olive oil. First remove the parrot detritus with wire-wool and apply the mixture, leaving it to dry overnight. — *Mrs Beverley Beauchamp, The Mound, Saffron Walden.*

QUESTION: Can anyone explain why the sea remains at the same level even though rivers keep flowing into it? — *Will Hutton, Farringdon Road, London EC.*

☐ RECENT research has proved the existence of several large holes in the bed of the Pacific Ocean which drain off surplus water. As the water nears the centre of the earth it is vaporised by the extreme heat of the so-called "Majmatite Layer". The resulting pressure gives rise to volcanic eruptions in such places as New Zealand and Ecuador. — *Professor Stephen Hawking, Cambridge.*

NEXT WEEK: Answers please: Why are there only 8 notes in the musical scale? Do butterflies have ears? Is it true that Max Hastings is a woman?

TV PICK OF THE WEEK

BBC1

Men Behaving Badly

THIS episode of the hit sit-com finds the girls running off to Cannes for a holiday in the sun, leaving their loutish men behind. While they're away will the jug-eared Gary hop into bed with his long-time mistress? While she's in the South of France, will the fat girl find her Mister Rich?

CAST

Gary ..... PRINCE CHARLES
Tony ..... PRINCE ANDREW
Dorothy ..... FERGIE
Debs ..... PRINCESS DI

BRITAIN'S Queen Elizabeth is becoming exasperated at the slow pace of divorce negotiations between heir to the throne Prince Charles and Princess Diana, British newspapers have reported.

Last week it was reported that Charles had offered Diana a divorce package worth £20 and that Prime Minister John Major had urged her to accept.

Sunday Independent (Ireland)

IN THE COURTS

England v. Pakistan *(3rd day)*

Umpire: Mr Justice Cocklecarrot

Justice Cocklecricket: Play. Sir Charles, will you open the bowling?

Sir Charles Greyman Q.C. *(for Mr Ian Botham)*: If it pleases, your Lordship, I have the honour to represent Mr Beefy Gorilla, perhaps the most distinguished all-round cricketer in the history of the universe. I refer you to this copy of the Islamabad Gazette and Evening Advertiser, dated 12 January 1987, and the article on page 27 headed " 'I Say Old Chap, Bothy and Lamby Are A Couple of Lower Class Oiks' Says The Greatest All-Rounder In The History Of The World, Imran Khan".

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, it will be my submission that this constitutes the gravest libel and scandalum magnatum ever perpetrated in the long annals of defamation and that as a result of its publication my client suffered irreparable brain-damage.

Cocklecarrot: Will someone kindly move the sight screens?

(Laughter in court)

Sir George Carperson *(for HRH the Imran of Khan)*: May I take the ball at this end, m'lud?

Cocklecarrot: Yes, Sir George, time for you to bowl a few of your googlies at Mr Botham. But mind you don't rub the ball with a bottle top!

(More sycophantic laughter)

Sir George: Mr Beefy, I would be obliged if you would watch this video of the second innings of the 3rd test match in 1984, England versus the West Indies.

(Film shows very blurred scene of man — possibly I. Botham — holding up ball shaped like avocado pear to umpire)

Sir George: Do you remember what you said to umpire Dickie Bird on that occasion?

Sir Justice Cocklecoleman: If you can't answer, I'll hand it to Bill Beaumont.

(More laughter)

Sir Gorilla: Of course I bloody can. I said "This t'ball is t'boogered" (© F. Trueman).

Carperson: Hardly the words of a public school man, I submit. Now Mr Beefham, I ask you to look at this copy of the News of the Morons for 23 July 1985, and in particular the headline " 'MY ALL-NIGHT SEX ROMPS WITH STONED BEEFY' BY BEAUTY QUEEN".

Does that not suggest that you have bowled a maiden over, Mr Bedroom?

Beefy: I appeal against the light.

Cocklecarrot: I think it's time for the luncheon interval. See you all at the Garrick.

The late Jonners *(for it is he)*: We've been sent a very handsome ginger and gooseberry almond cake by Mrs Perkins of Hat Trick Road, Deayton. And very nice it is too.

(The case was adjourned)

Fashion Note with Glenda Slagg

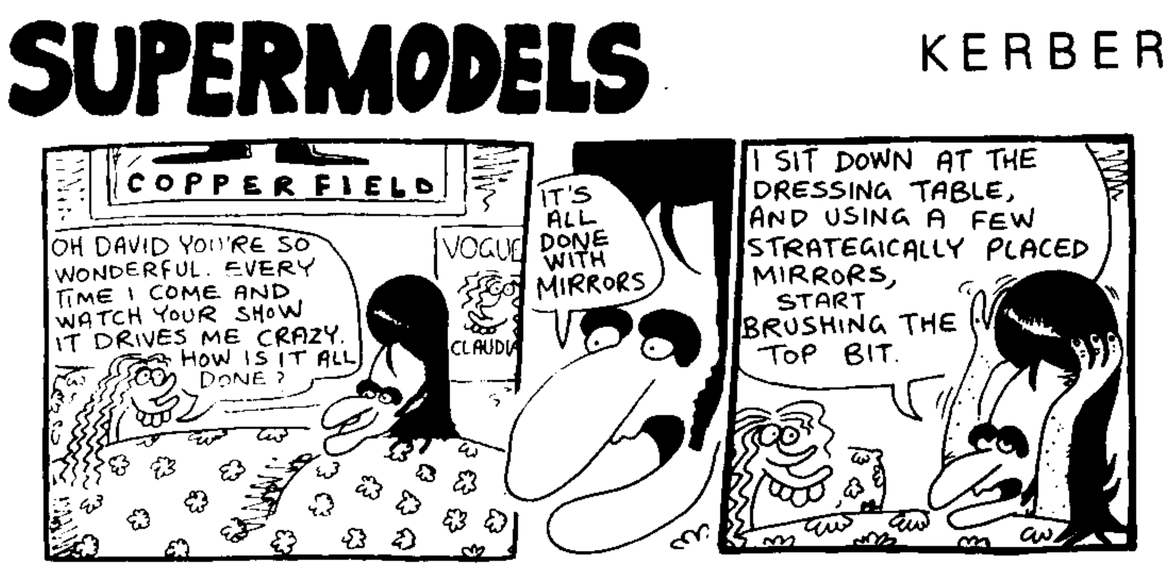
ALL EYES in Court 13 yesterday were on the dazzling purple and silver yashmak won by beautiful Mrs Mohammedina Khan, wife of defendant Imran, who also looked splendid in his morning coat and grey topper. Definitely a touch of the Royal Enclosure here! Also eyecatching was the handsome Mr Justice Cocklecarrot in his oh-so-severe white wig and scarlet robes. Very à la mode! By contrast, little Mrs Ena Gorilla seemed positively dowdy in a tatty M and S pink two-piece. If this case is decided by who wins the fashion stakes, then it must be *(contd p.94)*.

ADVERTISEMENT

'I Can't Carry On Any Longer Without Your Help'

Child D. is only 35 years old. She has two small children, both at school, and lives alone in a simple palace. Throughout her life she has been a victim. She was the child of a broken marriage. Her own marriage was miserable and short-lived. Her husband was constantly unfaithful. D. developed eating disorders and depressions, and now requires daily therapeutic help from a trained counsellor. D. has no job skills and cannot work to support herself. The Not-Royal Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Consorts (NSPCC) exists to help people like D. find the strength to go on living. We are an independent organisation which does not enjoy any form of Royal Patronage. Help us to help her help herself.

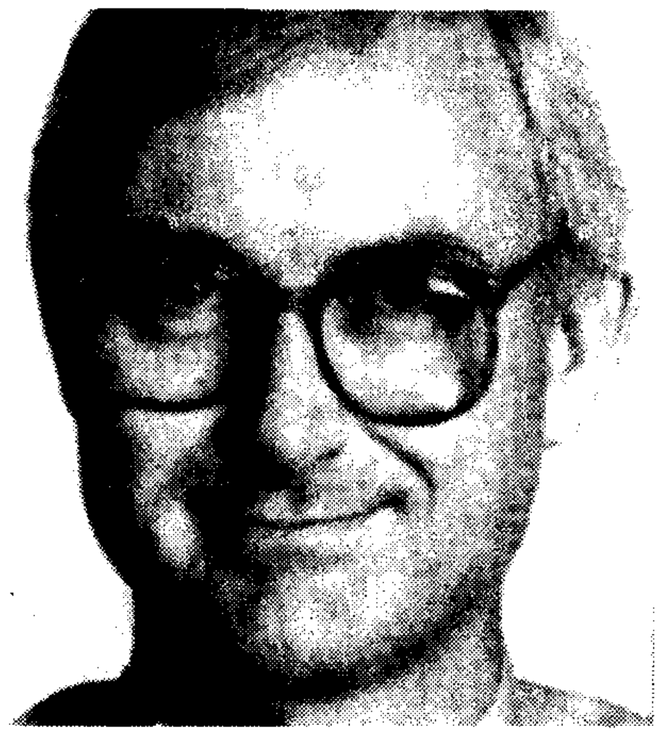
Patrons of the NSPCC include Mrs Ethel Wemyss, Mrs Roxana Cohen, Major Reginald Harbottle and Mr Sigismund Patel.


SUPERMODELS
KERBER
COPPER FIELD
OH DAVID YOU'RE SO WONDERFUL. EVERY TIME I COME AND WATCH YOUR SHOW IT DRIVES ME CRAZY. HOW IS IT ALL DONE?
VOGUE
CLAUDIA
IT'S ALL DONE WITH MIRRORS
I SIT DOWN AT THE DRESSING TABLE, AND USING A FEW STRATEGICALLY PLACED MIRRORS, START BRUSHING THE TOP BIT.

DIARY

RISE and shine! The screen on my personal planner informs me that this is my motto for today — and to my mind it's a motto my colleagues in the World Service might productively prioritise onto their own framework matrices. The full-scale outcry by colleagues in the World Service against my plans to re-focus, re-structure, dis-integrate, de-layer and ex-terminate their commodity is proof, if proof were required, that I am doing something right. Birt says: The world is changing, and we at the BBC must provide it with a place to hang its clothes. The World Service is indeed a valuable part of our output, as I was explaining to Cilla only yesterday. But, in a long-term global communication network it must learn to reflect the full range and diversity of my views. To my mind, it broadcasts far too many programmes of an "international" slant — forgetting that the ordinary licence-fee payer may not be able to get his tongue around Swahili, Spanish, Belgian or Swiss! But our new far-reaching proposals will afford the World Service unparalleled opportunities for embracing an agenda of change by downsizing to produce a varied selection of music and chat for the valuable Home Counties lunchtime audience; and for this reason I am delighted to announce the appointment of my colleague Mr Chris Evans to the post of Managing Director of the World Service, an appointment made only after full and far-reaching discussions with myself. So rise and shine, and, as Petula once said, let's try to make this world a better place — by letting it sort out its own problems for once.

John Birt, the human being (1): From time to time, my Internal Character Review Unit complain to me that my media image does not reflect my truly human personality, statistically speaking. This is one perspective that I'm determined to change. So then, amidst all his obvious reorganisational brilliance and restructuring flair, who, you may ask, is the real John Birt? Well, I'm very much a "people person", just so long as the project the people in question are resourcing isn't overmanned for the allotted task. I also like to keep fit, and to chat with close friends, if any. I think I can best demonstrate this "very human" side of my character with a statistically-based computer-generated flow-chart print-out, which shows that — contrary to my media image! — I am in fact very "true to life":

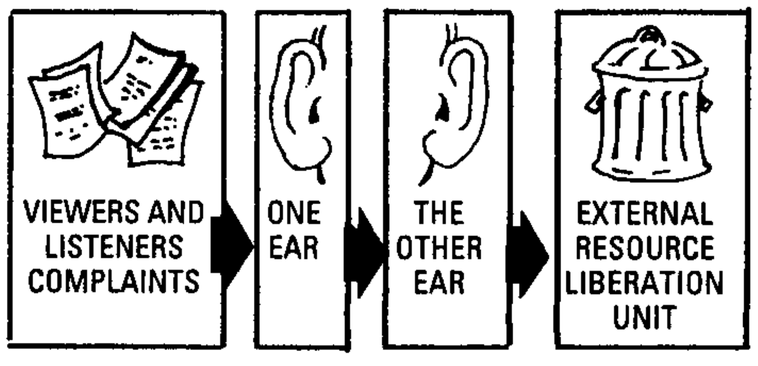


JOHN BIRT

productive — flexible — stimulating — aware — assertive — informative — accessible — durable — environment-friendly — cost-effective — fully waterproof — rechargeable — thermo-sealed — digitally-operated — computer-simulated —

The list goes on and on — but I think this taster serves to show that the man who's writing this is a real human being, and not some sort of robotrobotrobotrobotrobotrobotrobotrobotrobotrobo

We are always anxious to hear the views of you, the listener and viewer, and to that end we have established a regional framework of state-of-the-art interlocking waste-disposal units, thus helping to liberate external criticism and improve quality of feedback by immobilising it at source. Let me put it as plainly as I can by use of a chart-based pro-active statistical illustration:

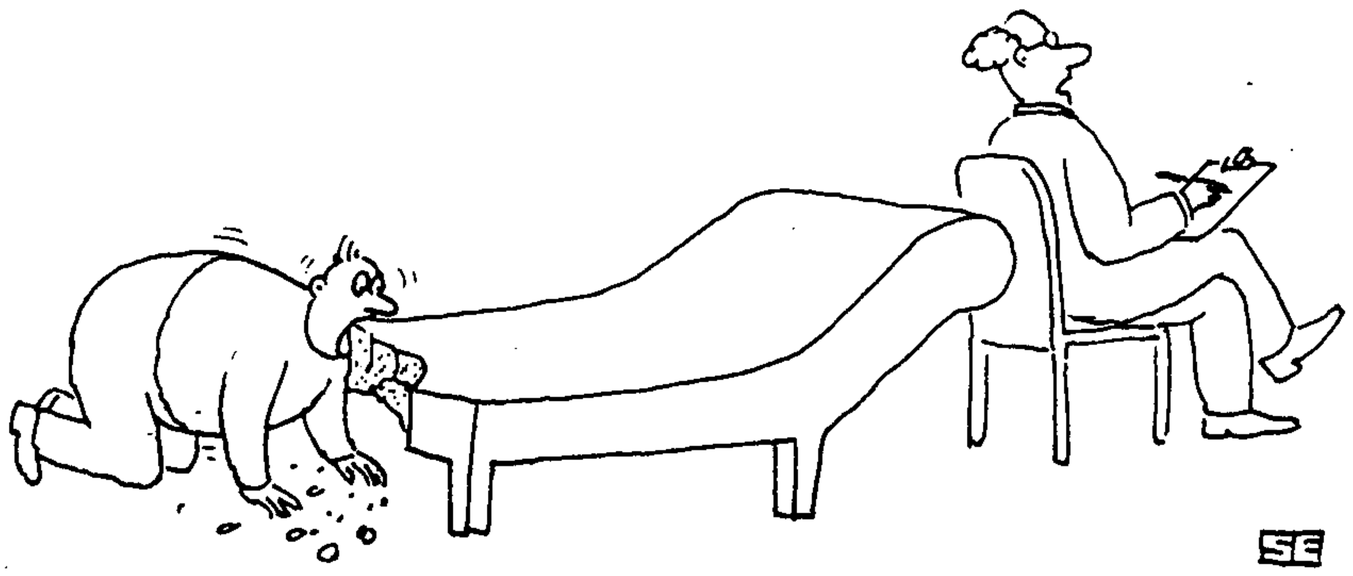


So much for the so-called "climate of fear" and "robot-speak" that some of my more junior colleagues — Tusa, Tulley, etc — have upsized in the media spectrum. I have even heard it said that I am a "control freak". But we won't be hearing that particular criticism from any BBC employee for a very long time. Of that I can promise.

John Birt, the human being (2): My fave progs? Thanks for asking! Personally, I enjoy all sorts of very varied radio and television programmes, but especially those that access an environment relevant to my own particular assumptions and/or post-modernist cultural overview. But if you forced me to name one special programme (and in fact it is written into the BBC charter that you cannot legally force me so to do) then I would single out a regular programme which combines rational vision and optic symmetry with the highest production values and a sharp eye on maximising available resources. Yes, the Test Card is a long-standing favourite in the Birt household!

It's an open and accessible secret that your Director General is firmly in favour of a good laugh. I firmly believe a sense of humour should be encouraged at all levels. For this reason, my staff are contractually bound to tell at least two jokes per year before a top-level committee, rising to three per year for senior management. These are assessed by our Internal Cross-Matrix Forward-Planning Humour Initiatives Assessment Unit on a scale of 34-96. This affords us the opportunity to compile a cost/benefit pie-chart to establish the relevant ratio of humour to productivity. Sadly, this scheme faces downsizing this year. Members of staff throughout the organisation have misinterpreted the agenda to include jokes on or about the Director-General, an inward-looking perspective that endangers our current prioritised guidelines re: the integration of cross-fertilised parameters.

These are our aims. The BBC must be individual but also universal, complex but also complete, disarming but also despairing, efficient but also deficient, distinct but also extinct. The BBC must place a foot in the future while keeping one foot firmly in the past and the other foot full-square in the present. The BBC must, in a very real sense, get bigger while it gets smaller, and more diverse while it learns to speak with one voice. It must gain authority by outsourcing those who have misused their authority to undermine its own. The future of the BBC is in my hands, and my hands will tread a firm path as we fly together towards the new millennium. Trust me!



"Tell me about your eating disorder"

FORUM TALK: Betty Clifton gives a talk about My Affair with a Benedictine Monk, tomorrow morning at the Retired Men's Forum (9.30am).

Bradford Telegraph & Argus 9.7.96

The talk by Betty Clifton at the Retired Men's Forum was called My Nephew, the Benedictine Monk, and not as reported in the Yorkshire Observer section of yesterday's Telegraph & Argus.

Bradford Telegraph & Argus 10.7.96

Literary Review

Sage and his Rosemary doing time

'She Must Have Known': The Trial of Rosemary West
Brian Masters
(Doubleday, £15.99)

IN the last few years, a disturbing new criminal phenomenon has erupted. It remains extraordinarily rare so far, but many believe we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg and that the scale of the threat cannot yet be accurately assessed. In any case, every example of this phenomenon is so shocking and repulsive to any normal person it cannot be ignored. Moreover, there is every sign that once the perpetrators get a taste for it, they will never stop until brought to justice.

This phenomenon is, of course, the serial biography of serial killers. By far the worst case yet discovered is that of Brian Masters. As is so often the case, Masters first appeared on the record with relatively minor literary activities, of the sort that many a young man commits, before growing up into a perfectly normal adult. He pretended to be an intellectual, with little studies of French thinkers. He tried to ingratiate himself with his betters by writing about dukes, duchesses and hostesses.

So far, so harmless, you may think. But by now Masters was in the grip of a power greater than himself. Suddenly, in 1985, he published *Killing for Company*, an apologia for Denis Nilsen, whom Masters found irresistibly sympathetic. They became friends. As an intimate souvenir, Denis gave Brian the pot in which he had boiled the heads of his previous chums. Brian found that on Denis's back he had catapulted himself to a new eminence.

Nonetheless he tried to stop, he really did. However depraved their tastes, these individuals always shock themselves the first time they act out all their dark imaginings. They swear never to let it happen again. But it does.

After hopelessly trying to turn back to his old way of life with a snobby little book about a maharana and an edition of Voltaire, Brian knew that only one thing could feed his inner demons. In 1993 he broke out again with *The Shrine of Jeffrey Dahmer*, whom he found hardly less companionable. Jeff had killed even more young men than Denis. When Brian went to see his old pal in prison and nervously told him this, Denis took a philosophical view. "That's showbusiness, Brian," he said.

Since then Brian has done it again and again. *Masters on Murder* appeared a couple of years ago; *The Evil That Men Do* just a few months back. Such serial biographers invariably find each new biography less and less satisfying, and so they resort to producing more and more of them, quicker and quicker, in a desperate search for satisfaction. Gruesome though his actions may be, it's impossible not to feel some sympathy with a man in such a wretched plight. All this time, Brian was still trying to reform, pathetically promising that each was his last.

Now he's gone back to his old ways with a vengeance. When he first heard about 25 Cromwell Street, goodness, how fast his heart must have beaten. Prey! But when Frederick West discovered that Masters was on his trail he finally understood that there was a fate worse than death, and hanged himself. That left Rosemary and here she is, in all her glory.

Many observers have professed surprise that Brian should have written up a heterosexual killer at last, because addictive biographers invariably put their own "signature" on their victims. In Brian's case, they've all been gay. Some have even suggested this is not his work at all, merely a "copycat" biography. But they have not studied the story closely enough. Rosemary West was enthusiastically bisexual. In her relationships with the girls she helped to murder, she can only have been unimpeachably queer.

So that's all right. Still, the gay-lesbian alliance has always been a bit phoney, hasn't it? Brian can't bring himself to cosy up to Rosemary quite as warmly as he did to Denis and Jeff, so he confines himself to arguing that she shouldn't have been convicted on the murder charges because there was no real proof. Secretly, he doesn't think she did it. Fred, he argues, killed them all somewhere else and then buried the bodies at Cromwell Street later, when Rosemary wasn't looking, listening or presumably sniffing for that matter.

His great piece of evidence for this theory is that the small bones which Fred removed from his victims — 612 of them — were never found in Cromwell Street. "Where are they?" he asks. So the murders and dismemberments must have taken place elsewhere. "The moment one accepts the logic of it, the idea that Mrs West must have known what was happening under her own roof loses most of its for.

Other than this suppo.
er, his approach is simpl,
through the story giving us th.
fit of his vast experience of
cases. Fred was the murderer. He
tell because he's known so many
them, specially the top ones, and h
can confidently say exactly what a
sadistic necrophile is like. Rosemary's violent temper, on the other hand, "denoted a person whose emotions showed, in the healthiest way, on the outside". "Serial killers are not made from such cloth," he rules.

He knows. "You do not become a murderer because somebody asks you to, but because you have murderous impulses which are no longer impeded by inhibition," he says. Substitute "biographer" and "biographical" and it's even more apt.

Plainly, serial killers need protection now from this particular serial biographer. Rosemary West herself "declined to co-operate", Masters says, regretfully. But others may not be so lucky. At the very least, some kind of register of these authors should be set up, so that people can be warned when one moves into their area. Masters is never going to stop now...

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

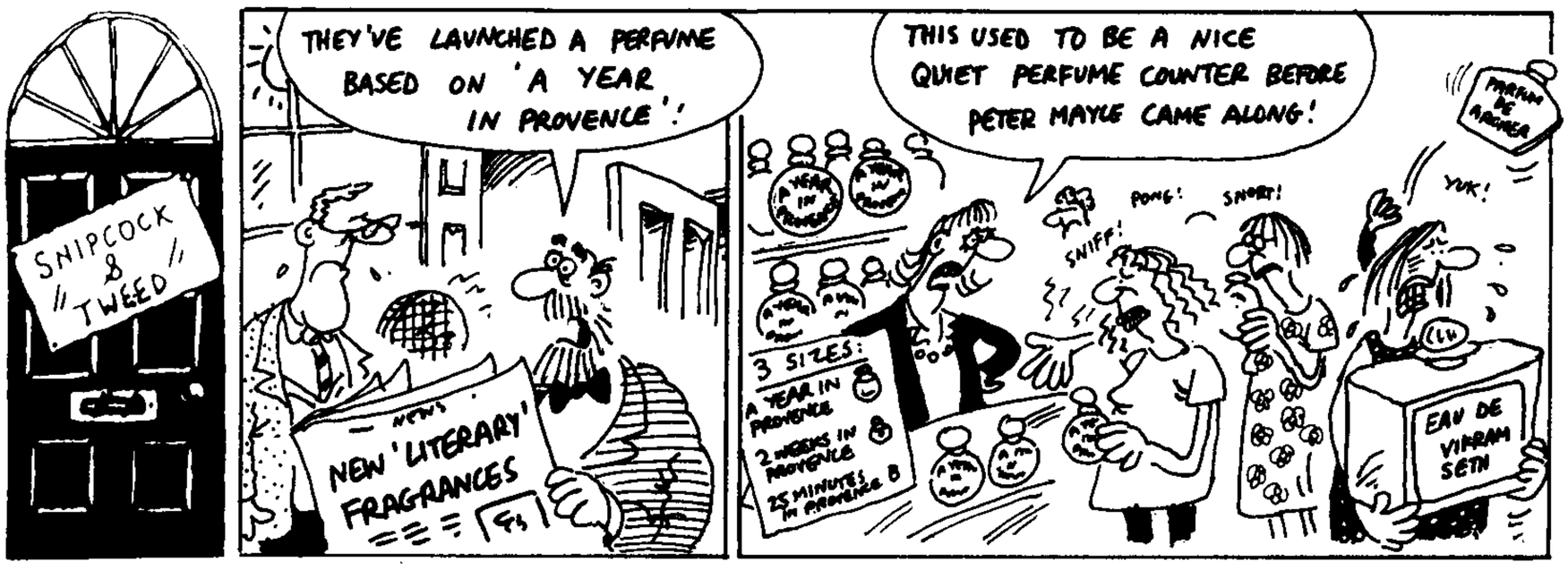
■ EXCITING news from Hodder Headline, whose autumnal blockbuster will be a hardback called *Inheritance* by BBC Northern Ireland hack Ian Baker.

Soon to be backed by a huge promotional campaign, *Inheritance* is, according to Hodder's Bill Massey, "one of the most exciting first novels I've ever come across. Baker is a real writer with great commercial potential."

He's also doing quite well financially, with a six-figure advance already banked and a US deal and follow-up novel to come. Just one slight difficulty remains before the book hits the shops and the advertising onslaught starts in October: *Inheritance* is set two decades from now in an Ulster which has enjoyed 20 years of non-violence following the success of John Major's peace process.

Hodder bought the rights last year, so it has had plenty of time to work out how to sell this interesting concept.

'Bookworm'



REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

THE MAGAZINE: Nigel Pratt-Dumpster's society magazine, *Dempster's*.

THE HYPE: An extension of Dumpster's infamous *Daily Mail* column — ie lots of glossy photos of dim Sloaney girls and articles about dull aristocrats.

LAST SEEN: At the Saturday market in Bracknell, remaindered on a magazine stall, 50 pence each or 3 for £1.20.

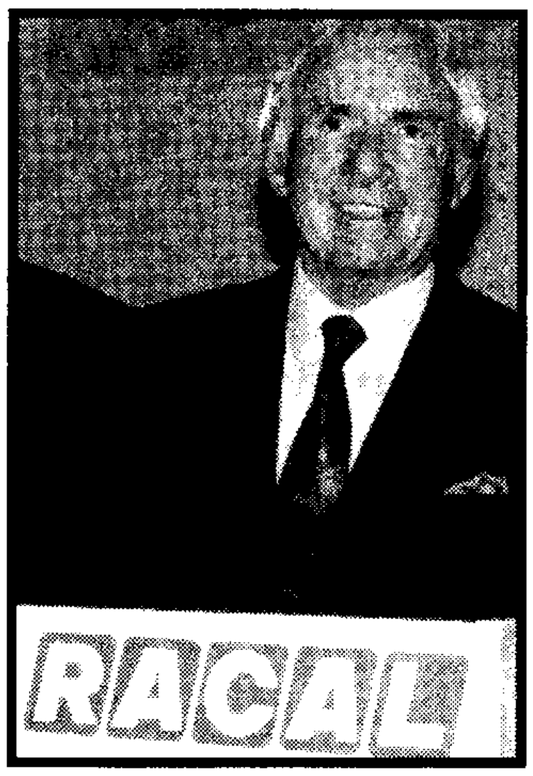
footnotes

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SIR ERNEST

THE defence contractor Racal would be in big trouble without its stake in Camelot and its share of Camelot's ridiculous profits from the national lottery.

Racal's recent accounts show that its huge £400 million Data Communications Group (profits only £21 million) would be scraping the barrel if it were not for the £15.1 million it claims as its share in Camelot.

Everyone at Racal is delighted with the government for handing the lottery contract to Camelot, and there is widespread rejoicing that for the first time ever Racal is to make a political donation to the Tory party — of £75,000.



GENEROUS: Chairman Harrison

The chairman of Racal, Thatcher knight Sir Ernest Harrison, passionately defends the new donation. Two other big companies have also decided for the first time to contribute to the Tories. Both have lobbed in £75,000. They are Chubb Security, whose chairman is Sir Ernest Harrison; and Vodaphone, whose chairman is Sir... well, you've probably guessed it by now.

PS: Racal's main parliamentary adviser, needless to say, is David Mellor, who somehow manages to avoid saying how much Racal pay him by asserting that "the existence of these contracts is not dependent in any way on my being an MP". The Eye makes an informed guess: £75,000.

Mills & Boom

■ WHAT a resilient chap is Roger Mills, the live animals exporter whose Live Sheep Traders company was wound up by the high court in November last year (see Eye 891).

Despite his £34,343 debt to Belfast firm Ulster Factors, he is now exporting live sheep again — to Belgium via Dover — with a new company called Grayward. He got the necessary certificates for this trade from the ministry of agriculture (MAFF) even though he doesn't seem to have paid the costs of his action against the ministry in April 1995.

He had tried to get MAFF's export licence conditions changed on judicial review, but Lord Justice Simon Brown decided he had no case and awarded some £30,000 costs against Mills's company. In February Mrs Angela Browning, junior minister at MAFF, told the House of Commons that the ministry "is seeking to recover the costs". But another answer of 4 June indicated that the money was still being sought "by the usual legal means".

Coe & Co. Ltd.

■ TWO of his fellow MPs are becoming increasingly concerned about the volley of questions from David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, about government grants to private firms in the South West.

● As he commentates in the media about the Olympics, former middle distance champion Seb Coe, Tory MP for Falmouth and Camborne, is keeping a close watch on the information which keeps coming out about one of the most influential Tories in his area: Michael Jordan, managing director of Cornish Stairways.

SEB COE MP

Mr Jordan is a prominent member of the South West Industrial Development Board, which advises the president of the board of trade on applications for government grants to firms in the area. Between February and May 1993 he attended three discussions of the board about an application for a grant from Pendennis Shipyard Ltd in Falmouth. In that same year Pendennis Shipyard got the first tranche of a £350,000 "regional selective assistance" grant from the government. In August 1993, Mr Jordan joined the board of Pendennis Shipyard Ltd. Asked what representations the government had received about the Pendennis shipyard, Mr Philip Oppenheim, junior industry minister, revealed on 10 May that he had been able to trace "only one representation" — from Seb Coe, on behalf of an unnamed constituent.

● Gary Streeter, Tory MP for Plymouth Sutton, is the new junior minister at the lord chancellor's department. He must have been shocked by BBC Radio's Face the Facts programme on 9 May about a bankrupt entrepreneur called Trevor Ivens who, along with his wife, had set up a number of companies in Plymouth in the late 1980s and early 1990s, all of which went bust with spectacular debts.

GARY STREETER MP

One of David Jamieson's questions extracted from the government the disturbing fact that one of these firms, Ivens Electronics Ltd, had had a regional selective assistance grant from the government of £50,000 in 1989, plus another £5,185 "consultancy initiative" payment in 1990. In 1991, when it went bust, Ivens Electronics' assets were sold to Ridgewood Industries, formerly Footlaw 26, an off-the-shelf company one of whose directors at the outset was Ivens's solicitor, Gary Streeter, a leading Tory councillor on Plymouth council (which had also given Mr Ivens a leg-up with rent concessions and removals assistance worth more than £70,000). Companies House records clearly show that Mr Streeter, who had nothing to do with the day-to-day running of Ivens's business, resigned from the board of Footlaw 26-Ridgewood Industries in October 1991. Five months later the company was wound up, with debts of more than half a million pounds.

If Gary Streeter at the lord chancellor's department were to promote a new law banning solicitors from acting as directors of "off-the-shelf" companies for their clients, he could save respectable solicitors like Gary Streeter any embarrassment they might suffer from appearing on the same board as shysters like Trevor Ivens.

THE GRASS IS CHEAPER

THE prevailing compassion at the Benefits Agency for people who claim benefits is succinctly summarised in two recent decisions.

1. On 12 July the agency suddenly closed its freephone service to any member of public with questions about benefits. This service had been a triumphant success since it was introduced in 1984. Three million people a year phoned in and had their questions answered free by 250 experts in centres all over the country. This cost £28 million a year.

A Benefits Agency spokesman told the Eye the closure was "to target resources on our core business — to deliver benefits". He went on to say that local benefits offices are better equipped to deal with individual inquiries than the freephone service. Then he admitted such inquiries to local offices will not be free, so the end of the Freephone will "save" public money.

2. While it shuts down this popular freephone service, the Benefits Agency is opening another one. This is part of its Operation Spotlight for tracking down social security fraud. The operation publicises a freephone number where callers can grass on their granny or their neighbour for as long as they like at the expense of the taxpayer. The Eye asked how much this is costing us, but the Benefits Agency couldn't come up with an estimate.

O'ROURKE'S DRIFT

THE latest twist in the astonishing story of John Gorman, the man who once dared to complain because he found a condom in his British Airways food, now threatens the future of several Metropolitan police officers, not to mention the credibility of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA).

☛ THE STORY SO FAR:

In 1991, John Gorman, a former Scotland Yard anti-terrorist branch detective, complained about the condom. British Airways accepted his complaint and paid him compensation. In January 1993, Gorman complained again when he swallowed glass in a British Airways drink. That same month British Airways settled a libel claim with Richard Branson of Virgin who had exposed a long campaign of BA dirty tricks. Gorman's second complaint apparently convinced the top brains at BA that Gorman was a mischievous stooge for Virgin.

Armstrong of the law

On 14 May 1993, seven police officers from Heathrow police station, accompanied by Robert Armstrong from British Airways security, raided Gorman's flat in Enfield, arrested him on his doorstep for conspiracy to defraud the airline, frogmarched him upstairs and sat him in the centre of his main room while they ransacked his flat, confiscating anything they thought might help their inquiries.

Gorman was taken to Heathrow police station, cast into a cell for 10 hours and then released on bail without charge. He was ordered to report twice a month at the station, which was 40 miles from his home. This went on for six months until the crown prosecution service (CPS) finally conceded there was not a shred of evidence against him and the case was dropped.

Some of his property was returned to him. There followed a series of abusive phone calls, and other harassment including an attack on him by two men who raided his flat. Three times his car was sprayed and damaged. Every one of these calls and attacks was linked by the assailant or assailants to Gorman's case against British Airways. Several of the abusive-obscene calls were traced to British Airways headquarters — and several more to Heathrow police station.

☛ NOW READ ON...

From the moment he started to complain about all this three years ago, Gorman has insisted that among the documents taken from his flat were letters from his solicitors about his case against British Airways. The police code for such raids expressly forbids seizure of privileged correspondence between client and lawyer. Gorman has always alleged that BA was especially keen to seize these documents because they would reveal the strength of his case against them.

During the PCA inquiry, which lasted two years, the two Heathrow officers who led the raid, detective constables Steve O'Rourke and Michael Hedley, insisted that no privileged documents had been taken. In the first PCA report submitted to John Gorman in August last year, no mention was made of the allegation about the documents. A few days later, on 29 August, Gorman wrote a long reply to the PCA, including:

"I must draw attention to one of the most serious omissions from your letter... the unlawful misappropriation by D.C. O'Rourke of privileged correspondence between my solicitors and myself in connection with my case against British Airways. The moment DC O'Rourke laid hands on the bundle of correspondence, I said to him most emphatically that under no circumstances was he authorised to look at any of it as it is covered by legal privilege. At that moment, Mr Armstrong [the BA security man] came over and said: 'Oh, we could do with those'."

All the documents, alleged Mr Gorman, had then been taken away. Mrs Linda Cawsey, of the PCA, took four months to reply. On 6 December last year, she wrote: "There was no evidence to corroborate your account that any privileged documents were removed from your home address and retained by the police. This aspect of your complaint could not be upheld."

Go fly a Kyte

The matter, she insisted, was closed. Several months later, DS Steve Kyte, a member of the police inquiry team which investigated Gorman's complaints for the PCA, had to check on a minor matter raised by Gorman. Kyte went down to the Metropolitan Police solicitors' office at Scotland Yard. There, in a box he had never seen before, was a bundle of documents. They included about 30 letters between Gorman and two firms of solicitors he instructed on his case against British Airways. The documents set out the solicitors views on the case and BA's attitude to it in frank and confidential terms. They were plainly privileged.

A special inquiry has now been set up under two senior officers from an outside force, Thames Valley police, to discover how the documents which the police and the PCA insisted were not seized or retained by police ended up in Scotland Yard's solicitors' office.

☛ FACT TO REMEMBER:

All administrative costs of Heathrow police station, including the salaries of the police officers there, are paid for by the British Airports Authority, a privatised company whose main customer is the privatised British Airways.

...AND ANOTHER FIRST FOR HEATHROW POLICE

■ JUST before what could have been an embarrassing court case, the Metropolitan police shelled out £5,000 plus costs to James Guthrie, a former customs officer based at Heathrow.

Mr Guthrie was riding his motorbike home from a late shift at the airport in October 1993 when a police car with two officers stopped him and accused him of going too slowly. He was promptly breathalysed and told he had failed the test, though he knew he had not drunk a drop of alcohol.

When he started taking notes of the conversation one of the officers got very angry and put him in an arm lock. In great pain he was hauled off to Heathrow police station where he was breathalysed twice. Both times the reading was zero. He was held for two hours.

When police heard of his senior rank in customs, they quickly tried to discharge him — but he demanded medical attention. Mr Guthrie sued the police for actual bodily harm, unlawful arrest and false imprisonment. On 2 July, after 2½ years legal wrangling, he reluctantly agreed to settle.

Fillip for Philip

■ FIVE months after the Scott report there is intense relief in the senior civil service that although a surprisingly large number of mandarins and diplomats were heavily criticised, not a single one has been disciplined or even reprimanded.

It is time to dish out the prizes for this truly magnificent achievement. For starters, Philip Colcutt, who was seconded from customs and excise to the cabinet office where he coordinated all aspects of the government's dealings with the Scott inquiry, has just got the OBE.

His Grace and favour

GREENING: The Duke gives the award

■ HIS Grace the Duke of Devonshire was the first to cheer when a local environment group in his area staved off a big British Coal opencast mining development in 1990.

SNAG, the Shilo North Action Group, won an award from the local paper, and the duke presented it at his stately home, Chatsworth House.

Now a new protest group is campaigning against another highly unpopular opencast mining proposal — a mining firm called J.R. Banks — on land near Chesterfield, owned by the Duke of Devonshire.

This time His Grace supports the development. He got very cross when protestors dumped a few bags of coal at Chatsworth House; and even crosser when the local Derbyshire Times said he intended to give his royalties from the development to pensioners on his estate. No, no, no; they got it all wrong. It is the bags of coal dumped by the protestors — not the royalties — that His Grace plans to give away.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE future of the British investigation into the $1.8 billion Sumitomo copper losses may depend on matters other than the clear evidence of fraud. Already some involved in the investigation complain that it is "political" — indicating that decisions are being influenced by external factors.

One obvious problem the Serious Farce Office has run slap bang into is the Japanese cultural preference for apologising, covering up and moving on from financial scandals. This is especially so where, as with Yasuo Hamanaka, the rogue executive has, in traditional style, fallen on his pen, confessed and taken the public fall, thereby absolving his bosses of any blame.

Clear signals of this response have already emerged: with the reluctance of the Japanese authorities to launch any prosecution, on the spurious basis that all the dealings took place outside Japan even though the victim (Sumitomo) is not; and with the reported lack of enthusiasm by Sumitomo to make documents and witnesses available to the SFO.

The SFO has hit this problem before. A corruption case involving the purchase of confidential contract information was hampered by a lack of cooperation from the two Japanese companies involved. Only one Japanese executive was ever tried and he was acquitted.

That case also indicated the problems involved in extraditing a suspect from Japan despite the existence of an extradition treaty. Yet SFO sources admit it would be difficult to contemplate a case against accomplices of the Sumitomo copper trader if Hamanaka himself were not also on the London charge sheet or there were a prosecution of him in Japan. The missing man defence is always hard to beat, as Maxwell I proved, especially where he was the one literally giving the orders.

Whether Hamanaka would be extradited from Japan to Britain is far from certain. More likely would be his extradition to the United States, which has more clout in Japan and might be prepared to take financial sanctions against Sumitomo if it did not ante-up bodies and papers.

A trial of Hamanaka anywhere would be likely to explode the present Sumitomo "rogue trader" story, just as the Singapore investigation into that other "rogue trader" Nick Leeson exposed the complicit wilful blindness of his greedy Barings bosses. For just as Leeson could not have blown Barings away without help, so it is clearly incredible to believe that Hamanaka could have done deals in the billions, given the paper trail and payments involved, year after year, without anyone else at Sumitomo being aware of his activities. That much is clear as a result of the questions raised with Sumitomo by the all too easily fooled London Metal Exchange in 1991 and 1993.

Like Barings, Sumitomo would appear to have been only too willing to allow the copper king to do his thing as long as the profits rolled in. It may also be the case that certain of Hamanaka's activities were tax driven, designed to generate "paper" losses for Japanese tax purposes that benefited Sumitomo. Losses that were matched by perhaps undeclared offshore profits through "straddles" or mirror transactions whereby a sale or purchase at a loss is matched by an exact opposite purchase or sale. Certainly Terry Ramsden used to facilitate such activities for Japanese brokers in bonds and warrants.

That appears to be what lay behind Hamanaka's 1991 request to David Threlkeld for a backdated confirmation of phoney trades exceeding $500 million. Hamanaka and another Sumitomo executive confirmed to the LME that these were wanted for "tax purposes".

Amazingly LME chief executive David King found this admission of apparent tax fraud acceptable and did nothing. Tax fraud is a criminal offence in Japan as it is here. Had Sumitomo been a British company King and the LME would have been co-conspirators; but of course they would never think of facilitating a fraud on the Inland Revenue. Yet because it was the Japanese taxman who was apparently the intended defraudee, this was somehow acceptable to the LME's cosy thinking. No clearer evidence could exist that self-regulation at the LME is well passed its sell by date.

Sumitomo is engaged in an internal investigation which appears in part to be designed to discover just what prosecutors and regulators in New York, Washington and London know, and what they intend. That could influence whether the Japanese giant decides to become more cooperative and volunteers some senior scapegoats. The company may not want to find itself having to explain why it had cleared executives who are named as defendants or co-conspirators on the basis of incriminating internal documentation or external testimony. If so, Sumitomo might think it preferable to get damage limitation in first by saying Hamanaka would be prosecuted in Japan and any other guilty or negligent suits have been sacked.

Unless the Japanese and Sumitomo change their tune and get on Hamanaka's case, the more likely prosecution is in Manhattan where the US attorney has no compunction about reaching out across the seas for defendants. A point which may in part explain the readiness of Winchester Commodities and its offshore owners Charlie Vincent and Ashley Levett to advertise their readiness to help the SFO inquiries. Better the SFO than the much more aggressive American version who might suddenly present the French/Monagasque authorities with an extradition request which might be all too readily complied with after a spell in an unpleasant French prison.

The SFO is keenly conscious of the need to avoid the kind of turf battle that occurred over BCCI. So if, as with Leeson and Singapore, the Americans have the better case it may well be that they will be passed the Hamanaka problem to solve. Where that would leave those here who assisted Hamanaka to defraud Sumitomo by false accounting or acting as co-conspirators in deception could depend on whether a self-contained British end could be carved out and matched up to a prosecution in Manhattan and/or Japan. And that is why the copper investigation is "political".

THE revelation that Amschel Rothschild was found hanging naked in his Paris hotel room will encourage speculation that his death was not suicide brought on by internal Rothschild wrangling but perhaps another example of a lonely suit getting too excited while enjoying the Milligan manoeuvre, with or without the orange. It may also explain why one of Rothschild's closer associates described the reason for his death as a "discreet, private thing".

"EVERYBODY should pay their fair share of tax and Labour is determined to ensure that happens," declares shadow chancellor Gordon Brown. A policy with which no doubt "Red Ken" Livingstone, Labour MP for Brent East, wholeheartedly agrees.

Which is why he has all his substantial outside earnings paid into a company, Localaction, thereby swapping the 40 percent top rate of income tax for the 25 percent small company rate of corporation tax. Except that Localaction, which supports socialist causes, does not pay 25 percent on all its income, which tops up Livingstone the MP's stipend of £34,000 going on £43,000. Instead, after allowable expenses, it paid only 18 percent on its £41,800 income last year and a remarkable 2.5 percent on income of £28,800 the previous year.

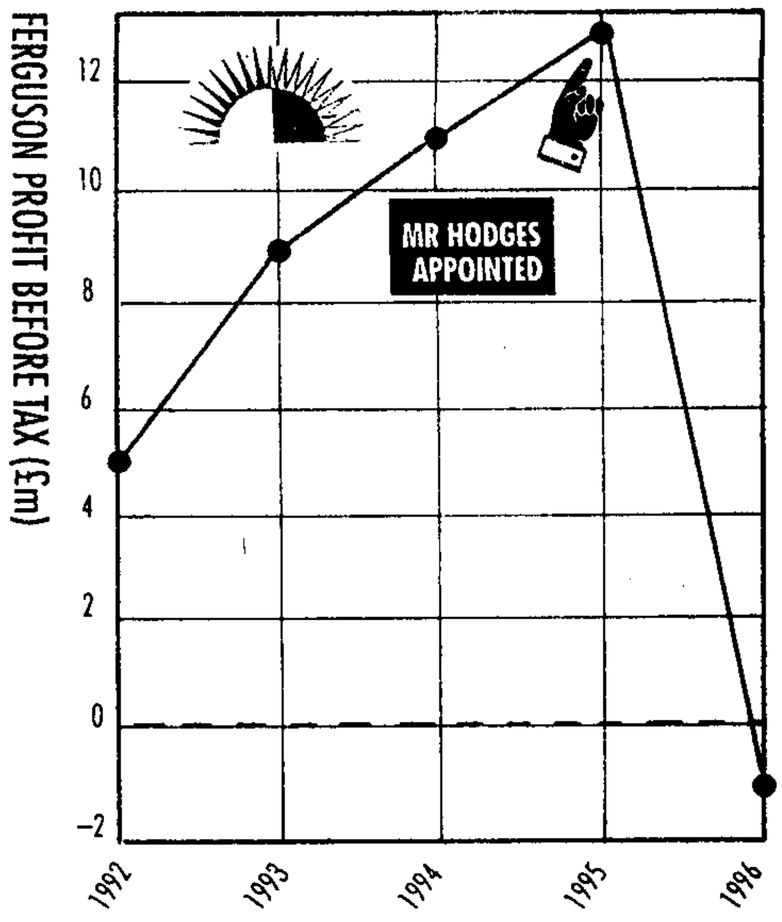
And even those figures could ultimately be reduced as a result of "Red Ken" — who says those, like him, earning more than £50,000 should pay more tax — taking money out as a director's loan, not as a salary. Clearly a case of Don't pay as I pay, pay as I say, comrade.

MORE evidence of convicted fraudman John Carway's fingerprints on the new improved version of the "thoroughly undesirable" Titan Business Club pyramid selling scam (*Eye* 901) is provided by the appearance of Alan Humphrey.

He is described as a manager of Titan International LLC, into which greedy fools are being invited to sink £3,000 on the promise that its shares will be saleable via the American NASDAQ market. Humphrey is a former director of the Carway-run Verit Industries, which crashed. More recently he was a director of Texas American Group, the Carway-controlled NASDAQ "shell" into which Stephen Hinchliffe planned to do his disappearing act before Facia's creditors pulled the plug. The case rests.

'Slicker'

British Management Part 40.
NICHOLAS RUDY HODGES, Chief Executive London International Group, manufacturers of Durex. Director Ferguson Holdings since 1995.



ENERGY NEWS

THE stock exchange will not investigate the decision of British Energy to delay its announcement that two of its reactors were down until after the deadline for buying shares.

This tactful silence cost unlucky Sids who had bought shares £50 million as the share price fell below even the most pessimistic forecast of BZW, which advised the government on the launch.

So how does the stock exchange justify its do-nothing attitude? A spokeswoman told the *Eye*: "We do not actually issue any information in situations of investigations. Whether we are or are not investigating anything remains strictly within the domain of the exchange." That's the City version of open government.

If such a distorted price-fix had been caused by a leak in a newspaper (as opposed to a reactor), the fraud squad would now be taking the filing cabinets apart. But in this case the beneficiary was the government. It was able to get rid of eight of its least desirable nuclear stations and make off with the loot. In the City, which claims to live on its reputation for reliability, this does not even call for an inquiry.

It comes at a time when the Department of Trade and Industry and its quangos and satellites are paranoid about "commercial confidentiality". Officials tend to cite the financial services act (which was intended to protect investors) to avoid answering the most innocent question. They are terrified their reply might be held "price sensitive".

THE full "benefits" of privatisation have yet to be felt by 100 sacked electricity showroom workers.

Their saga began in May last year when Yorkshire Electricity and East Midlands Electricity sold their jointly owned retail business, Homepower, to a company called PowerStore. The workers were sold on as chattels to the new owner, who promptly imposed a 25 percent pay cut. Staff lost their pensions rights, too.

However, 100 of them refused to accept the terms. Instead they walked out and filed industrial tribunal claims against Yorkshire and East Midlands Electricity.

One year on, the retail chain was placed in the hands of administrators immediately after the expiry of an agreement which would have provided for increased redundancy payments. So half the 1,000 workforce was laid off with only the statutory minimum.

The buck, however, could yet stop with fatcat electricity bosses who thought they had seen the last of the showrooms. The 100 former employees who refused the new terms last year, mostly women, have filed a £3 million industrial tribunal claim for unfair dismissal, sex discrimination and breach of contract. Sparks should fly.

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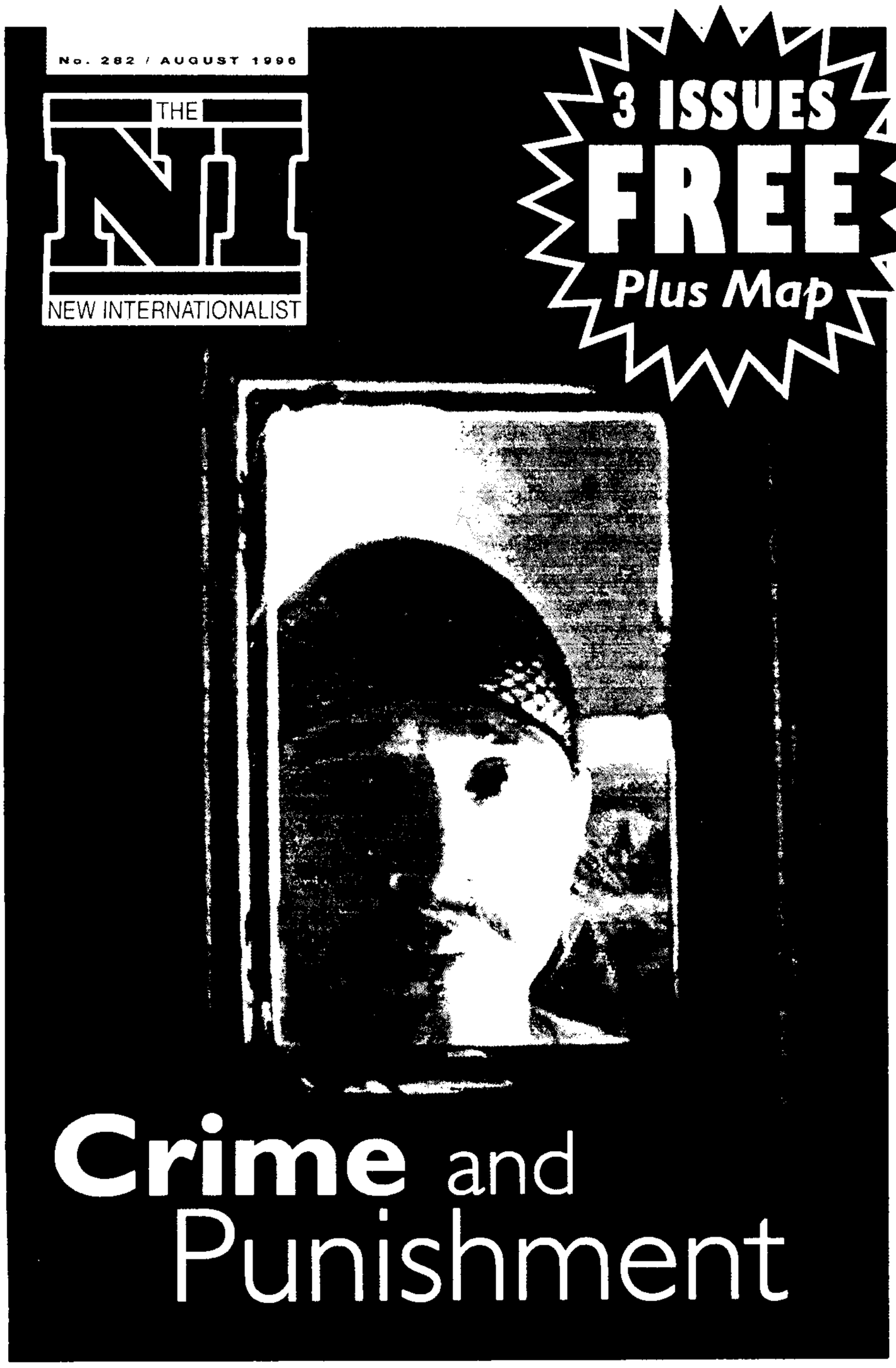
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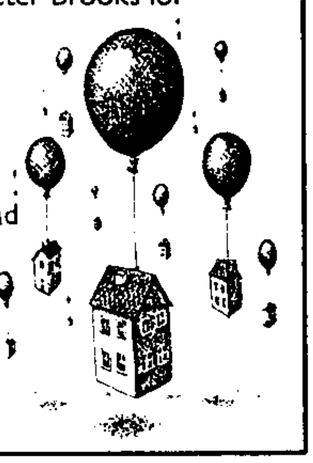

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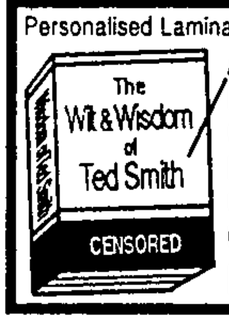

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Announcement:
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SENSITIVE, PROFESSIONAL male, 36, attached, seeks female 30+ for friendship and mutual affection. London/Berks. Box 3903.

SLIMLY ATTRACTIVE, unpretentious professional male, youthful 43, happily independent, seeking similar female (thirties?) for strictly physical and delightfully underhand pleasures. London SW. Box 4003.

WELL-TRAVELLED, TALL, 48 woman seeks International/Indian solvent Sun Rise on South Coast. Photo please. Box 4103.

NON-STUFFY PROFESSIONAL — own company, MBA, flat (Wimbledon), car. Sensitive, romantic, medium build/40 (young looking bit like Robin Williams), gsoh, seeks slim, ns female, 25-35 for friendship. SW London. Photo. Box 4203.

YOUNG AMERICAN BEAUTY seeks Wall St Trader, 30s something businessman for occasional liaison, touch of class assured. Replies to PO Box 10262, London W2 5GA.

ASSERTIVE FEMALE SOUGHT by prof male to explore exciting lifestyle. Box 4503.

ATTACHED BUT LONELY, attractive thinking woman seeks initially epistolatory relationship with witty, bookish, urban man, who remembers Dick, Snowy and Jock. Photo please. Box 4603.

CONVERSATIVE? Let's have a party at the next election. Box 4703.

LAUGHS? Kids laugh 300 times daily; adults hardly manage 30. This big adorable exotic N/S bearded 40s kid seeks a girl to laugh 50 times a day together. Box 4803.

BALDING SAXOPHONIST seeks slim soulmate near 40, Cheshire? Box 0902.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 53, n/s, married but apart, varied interests including theatre, classical music, sport, seeks slim, intelligent, sensitive, sexy lady for fun, love and hopefully long term relationship. Photo appreciated. Lancashire/Manchester. Box 1803.

ATTRACTIVE, PERSONABLE late 40s Manchester businessman seeks leggy lady companion for continental holiday. Photo appreciated. Box 1903.

PROFESSIONAL MAN (PhD) seeks girlfriend. Slim, 36, shy, amusing, some eccentricities. Many interests, especially natural history. NE/Scotland. Photo appreciated. Box 2003.

ATTRACTIVE, SENSIBLE chap (37), seeks cheerful, affectionate female pal to be unsensible with occasionally. Bosomy, voluptuous figure, more important than age. London. Box 2103.

E. ANGLIAN PROFESSIONAL male, 48, seeks a discreet, friendly, fun-filled affair with a married woman. Box 2203.

SOLENT AREA, divorced, (male 50), tall and slim, professional background. Would like to meet tall lady socially outgoing but not over-bearing, non-smoker, to be soulmate, or else someone special. Box 2303.

TALL, SENSUAL attractive solvent London man 40 with wicked sense of humour seeks an uninhibited younger sexy lady to pamper and for discreet champagne fun, passion and excitement. Own school uniform an advantage. For a little summer mischief please write with your telephone number to Box 2403.

DESPAIR OF FINDING a great man? 35-45, stable, amusing, independent, can handle a strong character, close to Cheshire? And female? Please write. I despair too. Box 2503.

MOST ELIGIBLE, discerning, good-looking bachelor, sporty, 39, seeks stylish female 23/36 with gorgeous body & mind. Box 2603.

SORT OF HAPPILY-MARRIED male, 40, reasonable soh, presentable, many interests, including appreciation of finer things, seeks cognate lady to compare notes. Central London. Box 1203.

LADIES — I'm looking for a one-only special woman to meet during the week and/or to accompany me on trips because even the best places in the world are no fun on your own. I'm 36 years old, attractive, humorous, etc. (but loosely attached) and the owner of an international group of companies, hence the frequent travel in UK and abroad. Box 3002.

WHAT'S A NICE GIRL like me doing in an ad like this? Like me, you are good-looking, professional, enjoy talking, laughing, eating and drinking. Not short of admirers — but discerning. Late 20s/30s. London. Photo please. Box 3102.

RADA-TRAINED post-graduate curvaceous lady (33) seeks cultured, humane, single, heterosexual mate. Box 2902.

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ARMY OFFICER, 27, in Bosnia seeks passionate woman for correspondence and homecoming celebrations. Box 1503.

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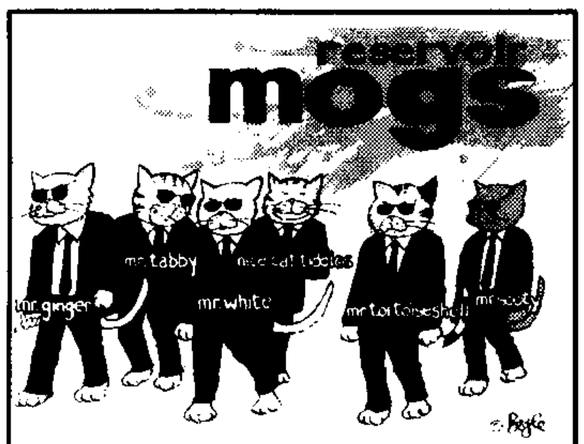

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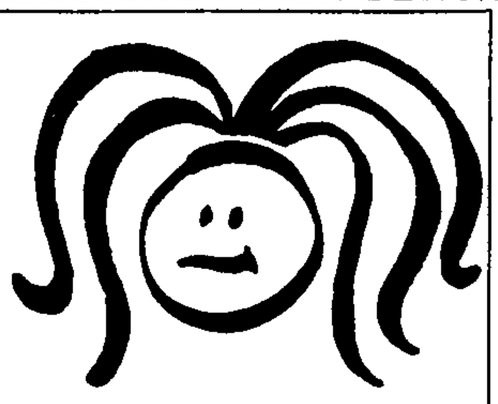

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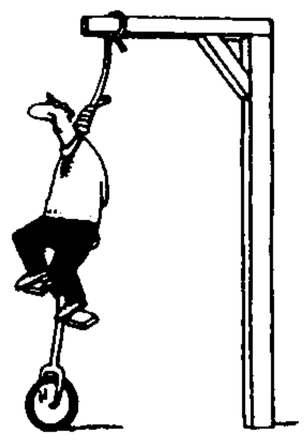

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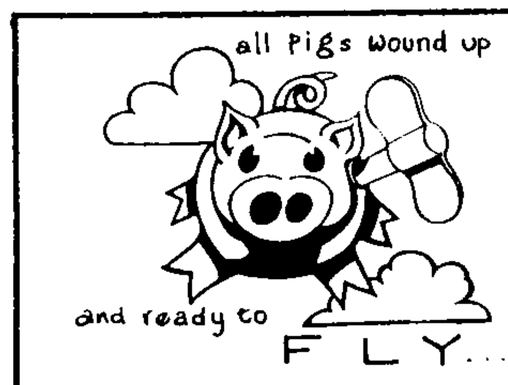

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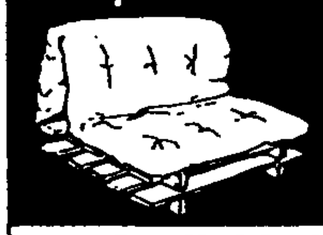

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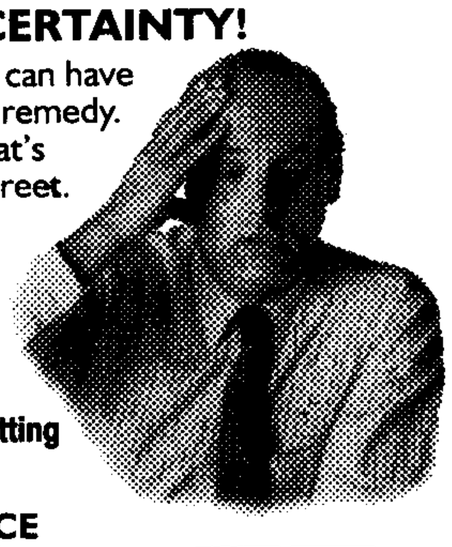

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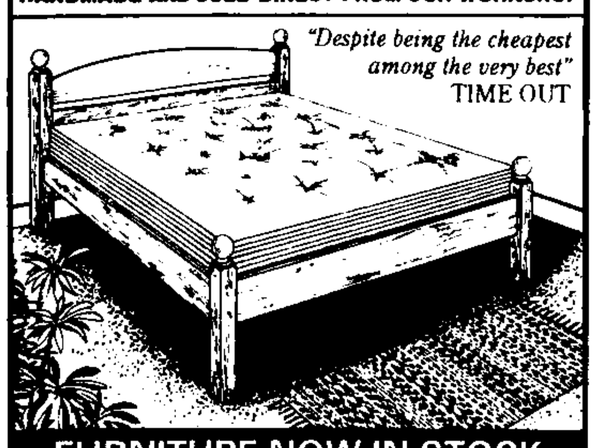

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